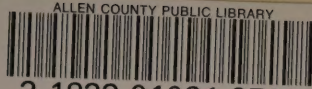


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Nov. 4, 1957 - 205 West 7th, Ames, Iowa

THEY WHO WERE STRONG

BY

CLARA LAYTON MADSEN

AND

G. F. HOOK

Hamilton County

PREFACE

In presenting this history of the little old town of Hook's Point, I wish, first of all, to express my thanks to all those people who spent so many hours patiently relating the anecdotes and giving me the information contained in this story, which are true experiences of the people who actually lived there and which I have tried, with my imagination and knowledge of pioneer customs and conditions, to weave into as interesting and authentic story as possible.

Finch Hook gave me the background for the story and is the only one who could give me the early history of the town, but he also told me many stories of other people who lived there. Other contributors are A. A. Deo; A. P. Gleason; Albert Bell; two daughters of Eva Stuart and Walter Milburn; Mrs. Isaac Chally and Mrs. John Blomquist; Mary Jane Whiteman, Eva Mae Angstrom, daughter of B. F. and Mary Jane Layton, and their son, J.W. Layton, who is my father.

In this little town that lasted only 32 years, people lived and people died; they hated and they loved; they were good and they were bad; but God created all of them with their shortcomings, their peculiarities, their good qualities and their varied, lovable ways.

There is an old proverb that says, "There is so much bad in the best of us and so much good in the worst of us that it ill becomes any of us to criticize the rest of us." Knowing the truth of this statement, I have found it distasteful to dwell on any of the failings of any of those courageous souls who worked and sacrificed, planned and struggled against such great odds to make possible the wonderful country of opportunity in which we live here in Hamilton County, Iowa, and especially around the old location of Kook's Point.

I prefer, instead to shroud their memory in as lovely a glow of idealism as possible and pay them the tribute they deserve as the early settlers who pioneered this new country in all its wild, uncultivated state of prairie sod and slo gh and woodland.

The dates are as nearly correct as it was possible to make them and should be accepted as authentic. There will undoubtedly be discrepancies in the minds of many readers of the time and place of some events, but that is always true because no one remembers exactly the same things in exactly the same way as others so it may be that some are not exact. Since it would be difficult to get them entirely right in everyone's memory, we have therefore taken the most plausible and written it accordingly when there was the slightest question.

Also it was not possible to tell everything because so many of the people are gone and scattered, but we have tried to give some space to as many as we could place satisfactorily. No one was left out intentionally who had any part in the history of Hook's Point and the immediate area.

There is nothing left of it now except one house, the new home built by Erastus Carpenter, the storekeeper; a strong building that defies time to erase it and take away the last remaining landmark. The Whitaker farm, now the home of E. H. Hawbaker, is still one of the finer places of the county; the old house has been remodeled and the years landscaped so they are truly beautiful. The old cheese house is still there and many other buildings. The Milburn house burned recently.

Even the old trail and ravines are changed for a new highway that sweeps around the bend that was once an important corner of the little town, so there is only one house left and the memories of the place contained in this book which shall be a monument to the grand people who lived there, mine and perhaps yours; for they and their descendants are scattered to the four corners of the earth and I hope that if they read this they will be as proud of them and their past as I have been of the privilege of writing their story.

The Author

THE PIONEER'S COAT OF ARMS

Written by Albert Bell of Stratford, Iowa in May 1934

The rifle and axe might well have been adopted by our forefathers as their coat of arms, heraldic emblems that signified their mission as the harbingers of civilization and the conquerors of the American Continent. With these rude implements they built and defended their homes, fences, barns; and with them constructed many of the utilities of every day use.

When traveling, and they stopped at night to camp, the axe was the first thing in demand to clear away a camping place or to chop wood to make a campfire. Perhaps parties had been out with rifles scouring the woods along the way, keeping a sharp lookout for game.

When the emigrant had found a place to make a home, the first tool he again thought of was his axe. This homely tool was a worthy advance agent of civilization, the forerunner of architecture, structural building and preceded the coming of beautiful homes, schools, factories, mills, prosperous cities and vast industrial enterprises. All that the axe was to our forefathers' home and farm, the rifle was to our commissariat defense, so much did they rely upon their rifles that they always kept them ready at hand and in condition for immediate use.

The old time rifle and musket had a flint lock which, with the best care possible, sometimes failed to fire. It therefore behooved them to keep their guns in the best possible condition for any emergency that might arise.

When white man and Indian met in mortal combat the gun that fired first usually settled the question, so the failure of the white man's rifle to shoot would mean that he must become the victim of the Indian's gun.

Knowing how to load quickly was a valuable accomplishment, both history and tradition relate instances where an Indian and a white man were in a fray, at close range with an empty gun, then it was a race for life or death which could load quickest.

Other times when traveling or even at home, our forefathers were in dire straits for meat and by good fortune a deer or elk came in their way, it sometimes meant starvation if the gun flashed in the pan and failed to shoot. It was worse when the hunter was met by a bear or crouching panther and his rifle failed him. Hunting was indeed more than sport or pastime, it became, by necessity a large part of the pioneer's occupation in life in securing meat for his family.

Snow covered the prairie and piled in drifts against the log cabin, and the feeble glow of the tallow candle filtering through the cracks between the boards that covered the window openings in the cold weather, was the only cheerful note during the long evenings.

Isaac came to the house when the last evening chore was finished, his cheeks ruddy from the biting wind and as he lifted the latch to open the door and admit him to the cozy warmth of his fireside, he loved to stop for a moment and gaze out over the endless prairie that stretched to the southeast, then turn to the dark depths of the nearby woods and listen to the mournful howling of the wolves as they held their vigil in the lonely safety of the wilderness that lay still and impenetrable beneath the prairie moon.

THEY WHO WERE STRONG

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THEY WHO WERE STRONG

Chapter 1

The Lure of Far Horizons

An early October sun was setting in a blaze of glorious autumn colors and the chilly night air was beginning to creep through the thick, warm clothes of the two men sitting high on the seat of the covered wagon when they stopped their tired team near the fort on the bank of the Des Moines River. The horses relaxed immediately to a restful posture and champed their bits hopefully because they were hungry and impatient for their evening feed. The men sat unmoving for a moment and in silence contemplated the scene before them.

A small fort approximately 20 x 40 feet in size had been erected in a clearing along the river. It was constructed of logs hewn to fit closely together except for small openings in various places through which to shoot in time of Indian raids. A high stockade enclosed the fort and altogether it gave the weary travelers a welcome feeling of safety just to look at its solid and sturdy construction.

"Well, I reckon we might as well make ourselves known and see about stayin' here tonight," remarked Isaac Hook, the older of the two men, "Lawsy, I'm tired."

"That's what I think too," replied the other man. "We've been sittin' long enough seems to me, all the way from Indianny. You go find somebody, Ike, while I unhitch these horses and water 'em. Oh, oh, but I sure am stiff; don't know as I'll ever git limbered up again after that long ride. Wouldn't mind restin' a spell myself, how about you, old pal?" Jim Hook, brother of Isaac gave the right bay horse an affectionate slap on the rump as he climbed stiffly down from the wagon seat and went ahead with his job of unhitching the team. He was self-appointed horse wrangler, preferring to leave the business end of the trip to his brother while he did most of the work.

Isaac went up to the gate of the stockade and called out a loud "Hello!" Almost instantly the door of the fort opened and a soldier came swiftly down the path to the gate.

"Hello, yourself," he said with a friendly smile. "My name is Bill Carter. Who are you and where are you from?"

"I am Isaac Hook from Indianny, and my brother is with me. We would like to pitch our camp here tonight an' see about crossin' the river tomorrow."

The soldier had given the stranger a quick, keen scrutiny then, apparently satisfied with what he saw, extended his hand courteously to clasp Isaac's hand and said in a friendly manner, "Certainly you can stay here tonight and you don't need to sleep in your wagon either. You can come right inside the fort, have supper with us, and spend the night under a roof. Where is your brother?"

"He is takin' care of the team. I'll go an' tell him about your kind invitation. You won't have to coax him to come in either."

"I'll go with you," said the soldier.

They went over to the wagon where Jim was waiting with the horses. Isaac introduced the two men and told Jim they were staying in the fort that night.

"Sounds fine to me," Jim assured them. "Won't have to be a worryin' about some ornery redskin doin' a scalp liftin' job tonight. When do we eat? I'm nigh famished."

"Supper is almost ready. Come right in as soon as you have taken care of your horses," said Carter.

Isaac and Jim quickly unharnessed the team, picketed them in a grassy spot, then accompanied the soldier to the fort.

The three men made a picturesque appearance as they walked through the stockade gate and up to the fort. Isaac and Jim were of medium height, broad shouldered and robust, with blue eyes and dark hair, and the genial, friendly characteristics of the Irish. They wore moustaches and their hair was long. Their clothing was made of strong durable material, but was now worn and travel stained from the long journey. But in their eyes was the gleam of courage, the spirit of the pioneer that had kept them traveling on into the west toward the goal for which they were searching -- a new home on the frontier.

The soldier was tall and slender, dressed in soft buckskin coat, trousers and high boots. These men represented the two types of men necessary to the taming and settling of the new country; the adventuresome spirit, courage and dreams of the pioneer and the assurance of protection and safety provided by the soldier.

Isaac and Jim were given a glad welcome when they entered the building and cleaned up for supper. Then they all sat down at the long table and thoroughly enjoyed the well-cooked meal of meat, beans, cornbread, wild crabapple sauce and coffee. They enjoyed, too, the conversation with the soldiers that lasted far into the night, talk of the new country opening up all around them, of its possibilities with its fertile soil, abundant timber and numerous streams. With these things the pioneer was practically self-sufficient; materials for his home and fuel for his fire, wild meat and fish for food, water power for his grist mill and fertile soil to grow other food to supply his family. Naturally, the newcomer followed the streams and the woods and staked his claim and his future on them.

They were disappointed when they learned it would be impossible to cross the river until it froze over so they might cross on the ice. But pioneers were accustomed to setbacks and discouragements so calmly bided their time until they could move on. Fortunately, they had to wait only two weeks when the weather changed, it turned bitterly cold and inside of four days the river was frozen over so a safe crossing could be made.

Bidding adieu to their friends at the fort, they drove across the river and headed north, hoping soon to reach their destination. They passed through Polk City, Boonesborough, and Ridgeport, the landscape a neverending delight dressed in its autumn coat of bright colors. Late in the afternoon of the second day, they felt certain they were near the place where the soldiers had told them some people by the name of Bell had settled the year before. As they reached the top of a small hill the horses slowed down, stopped and looked expectantly around at the driver as if to say, "Well, here we are."

"What's the matter, Prince and Pat, are you tired?" asked Isaac. "Well, we have come quite a ways today. You know, Jim, this is a pretty place. See all those big trees around here and by the looks of that ravine over there the river must not be far away."

"Yeah," replied Jim, "and just notice all this level ground around here to the south and east; make some mighty nice fields if somebody wanted to plow 'em up."

As it was nearing nightfall, they decided to stop there at least until the next day. After the cold snap the weather had moderated until it resembled Indian summer, but it was still too cool to ride in comfort. The men felt cold and stiff from their long ride and were anxious to get down from their seat and move around. With his axe, Jim broke the ice on the small creek that flowed through the ravine, then watered the horses, unharnessed them and fed the grain to them. Blankets were thrown over the horses to protect them from the chilly night air for they were warm from their work.

Isaac cut some wood and soon had a hot, crackling fire burning which warmed the men and made them comfortable while they prepared their supper. It was a plain meal, as usual, but a hungry man in a situation such as this is thankful for the most humble fare and enjoys it. The hot coffee revived their energy and rekindled their eagerness to find a suitable location before winter set in to severely.

The next morning after the breakfast work was finished they proceeded to drive on farther north to learn if they were as close to the river as they had thought. To their delight it proved to be no more than two miles and they were then sure that the Bell settlement was only a short distance west of their campsite though across the river. They drove back to their camp and after discussing the situation a while decided to stay there. It was a beautiful place and its first appeal increased by the hour as the brothers set about making plans to remain.

Their first task was to clear away a spot where they could erect a log cabin in which to spend the winter. There was no time to lose because it was now late October and snow and colder weather could be expected at any time. Protection from the elements was the first essential provision a settler must make in a new wild country. They built a rude, one room shanty of clapboards which were made from three trunks split in half. The flat sides were used for the interior walls and the bark side for the outside walls while sod was used as a covering for the roof. A fireplace in one end provided a place for heating the room and cooking the meals.

During the winter the men spent the time cutting trees for fuel and in procuring a good supply of logs to be used in building a better log cabin in the spring when Isaac expected the arrival of his wife and their three children. (They hunted often, the fresh meat gave variety to their cooking and helped stretch their food supply which must last until Spring. They tramped through the woods, exploring and familiarizing themselves with the countryside and each day growing more fond of their location.)

They became acquainted with the Bell families which had come the year before in the fall of 1848. Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Bell and their four sons came up from Marion County, Iowa, and erected four cabins thereby making the first actual settlement in that locality. The old homestead of Ike Bell was located on the west side of the Des Moines River on what was later known as the Tony Frederickson place in the Belleville vicinity.

It was not a dull lonely winter for the two men as might be expected while they were so far from home folks and familiar surroundings here in this strange country.

The boys married and settled on claims along the Boone and Des Moines Rivers. Pres lived at the present location of the Old Shelton place three-fourths of a mile west of Bells Mill Park. Jake lived on the present Fred Fry place west of Belleville bridge, and Isaac Bell Jr. the father of Albert Bell in this story built his home on the Earl Richardson place.

The pioneer was a man who enjoyed a certain amount of solitude and he never tired of listening to the timber noises, the sighing of the wind through the trees, the songs of birds, the patter of four-footed animals as they scurried over dry leaves and twigs. However, he must always be wide awake and on the alert to protect himself from danger at all times. Their hunting expeditions demanded constant caution. Wolves were a menace as they would attack a man when hungry.

One time when Isaac and Jim were returning with some game, a pack of wolves trailed them by the scent of warm blood and were only a few rods behind them when the men realized they were being followed. They were nearly a quarter of a mile from the cabin yet and immediately broke into a run hoping to reach the safety of the little house.

Jim paused long enough to shoot into the pack while Isaac hurried on with the game but it only served to incense the wild beasts more and they came on at a faster pace, yelping furiously. Isaac dropped a rabbit hoping to divert their attention but they would not be so easily distracted from their objective.

At last the men reached the door of the cabin with the wolves snapping and snarling at their heels. Jim opened the door and Isaac quickly followed him inside. But the leader of the pack managed to put one foot inside the door before Isaac could close it whereupon he took the axe, which was always kept in the cabin when not in use, and chopped the wolf's foot off. This treatment was too severe for the leader who jumped back and ran frantically away, limping and yelping with pain while the others followed swiftly.

There was always work to be done that helped to pass the daylight hours and during the long winter evenings they sat beside the fireplace in their rude cabin, comfortably warm and secure while the wintry winds blew their steely blasts against the clapboards.

At these times as they sat and smoked their pipes their thoughts turned from the future on which their daylight thoughts were centered and they became reminiscent. They talked of their boyhood days and adventures back home in Indiana which, although familiar to both of them always seemed to assume a new significance and greater delight each time they lived them over again in retrospect.

The years of their manhood had been full of interesting events they loved to recall so as one story followed another the evening hours passed swiftly. When the fire burned low Isaac piled more logs on the coals to keep the cabin warm during the night and the men sought rest in their rude bunks along the wall.

The fatigue that comes from physical exertions, the relaxation that comes from steady nerves and peaceful thoughts, combined to bring restful slumber to these two strong, far-sighted men whose unselfish efforts were helping to lay the foundation of a great country. Isaac soon drifted into dreams of his former home and he was again with his family, whose presence was the only thing lacking to complete the feeling of home that this new country had promised from the time he had first seen it.

Early in the spring of 1850, Isaac began work on the log house he wished to have ready for his family when they arrived. There was wonderful timber here, great tall trees, growing straight and clear of underbrush. Walnut and oak trees, the choice of the pioneer, grew in profusion. The walls of the house were made of round walnut logs, chinked with split sticks in the cracks then daubed with clay and covered with clapboard, split out of oak. This made the walls wind and moisture proof and therefore very warm. The floor was of dirt, carefully smoothed

down. Flat pieces or slabs of oak formed the roof because the oak split easily and was more adaptable to this purpose than walnut. To split the logs, the pioneer used a tool called a "frow" which was made of a blade about a foot long and three inches wide fastened to a handle. The boards were held in place by weights. Square holes were cut in the walls for windows and these openings covered with waxed paper until muslin could be secured. Sometimes the holes were left open except when the severe cold weather made it necessary to board them up. They built a large fireplace in one end of the room out of split sticks and plastered them with clay.

The furnishings for this home were very simple. Since the house was only 16 x 24 feet in size, the regular size of most log houses, there was no room for more than the most necessary pieces of furniture. Large holes were bored into the logs which formed the walls of the house and into these seasoned sticks were driven extending into the room far enough to support a bed. Some bunks were made in the same way, one above the other.

More of the split slabs were fastened against the wall in the same manner for cupboards and water bench. Chairs were made without backs. Long benches were more commonly used being made of long slabs set up on legs and tables were constructed in like manner.

Isaac and Jim worked hard and were proud of the house when it was finished. Some of the men in the Bell families had lent a helping hand occasionally for these few people scattered about the country were dependent on one another for help and companionship. "Help one another" was their watchword for they knew that only by working together could they hope to survive or succeed.

The days grew longer, winds blew, and April showers brought the leaves out on the trees and the flowers bloomed on the hillsides. Isaac thought it was a pretty place in the fall when he had first seen it, and he had enjoyed the winter scenery when a mantle of snow had covered the bare ground like a protective coat. But in the first lush growth of spring, when all nature awoke from its winter slumbers and burst forth in all its grandeur, he was spellbound by its beauty. Robins sang and built their nests in the four white oak trees that stood in the yard shading the log cabin with an air of loving protection. Combined with all these things was the feeling, the atmosphere of home that seemed to envelop Isaac each time he came in sight of the house that would shelter his family. Many times he caught himself gazing down the trail hoping to see a covered wagon rolling along in his direction and now, much more than during the long winter days, he missed his family and longed for their arrival.

One day, late in April, as Isaac and Jim were returning from a hunting trip they were overjoyed when they saw two covered wagons standing by the log cabin and heard the sound of happy excited voices filling the air. Hastening their steps, they were soon in plain sight of the house and the children who had been waiting for their return heard their father's call and ran to meet him and their Uncle Jim. With glad cries of happiness they all hugged their father and all talked at once. Jim looked on with a sympathetic smile, enjoying the happy reunion and listening to a confused jumble of greetings.

"I'm so glad to see you, Papa" cried Hannah, "I got awful tired riding in the wagon all that long way."

"I didn't suppose it would be so far from Indiana," said Sarah, "I was afraid we would get lost on the prairie somewhere, but Grandfather says he can follow a trail as well as an Indian and I almost believe he can."

"I'm glad you found the place easily," said Isaac, "I did worry some about you getting here all right. It's a long trail."

"I thought it was fun following the trail and trying to find the place according to the directions in the letter you sent us," Frank said. "Took it a long time to reach us. We met a man down the trail a ways and he told us we were almost here and we were so glad to hear it. He said his name was Isaac Bell and lives across the river. But I would have known this was the place when I saw the horses in the barn. I believe they knew me too when I spoke to them, they acted friendly."

"I suspect the horses did remember you Frank even if you have grown a lot and look all of your 15 years. This Isaac Bell you saw helped us with the house and has been a good friend. My dear children, you don't know how glad I am to see you and know you made the trip safely. But where is your mother, and how is she? Let's go on to the house," urged Isaac.

"Oh, she's fine," exclaimed Hannah, the youngest of the children and eight years old, "and she thinks you have made us the nicest house. She started right in unloading some things and fixing the place up a little so it would look more cheerful or something I guess."

"Now Hannah," interrupted Sarah, 13 years old, "you shouldn't have told him. Mother wanted to surprise him."

"Well I didn't say exactly what she was doing," protested the talkative child, "he won't know what it will look like until he sees it, and anyway you know what Grandpa said don't you? He said, 'seems to me you women might see about fixing up a good meal for those old bachelors instead of getting in such a hurry about decorating this house. It's all right for a few hours yet and I'll bet those two men have had about enough of their own cooking by this time.'"

Isaac laughed heartily at his small daughter's chatter. "Haven't changed a bit, have you Hannah? Always ready to do the talking for the family. But is is wonderful to hear you. My, how you have all grown! Frank you are almost a man now and Sarah looks just like her mother with her blue eyes and light hair. It will be good to have you working with me again Frank, like we used to and have Hannah here to entertain us." He pulled one of her long braids of dark hair lovingly, causing her brown eyes to sparkle with joy at this affectionate gesture.

Frank was greatly pleased by his father's words for he too, had missed the close companionship that had always existed between them.

"I drove the team of horses all the way," he told his father proudly. "Grandpa says I am a good driver."

"I'm sure you are son," replied the proud father.

Sarah had hurried on ahead to tell her mother that Isaac was coming and Mrs. Hook now came outside with a happy smile and greeting. Husband and wife were inexpressibly glad to see each other again and their tender embrace bespoke the fullness of their hearts that their lips could not. It was a sacred time, this meeting here in the wilderness and strangeness of this new home and one toward which each had been looking forward for many long, lonely months; suppressing their fears and anxiety for each other but always looking fearlessly and trustingly ahead.

Isaac was possessed of a roving, questing nature and was always wanting to push farther on to new places and leave behind the security and uneventful atmosphere of an established community. For him, new horizons held an appeal and a promise he could not resist. While his wife, being of a less venturesome turn of mind, clung more to the stability and safety of her homeland. To her the setting sun held no fascination, for she was content. As a result of their conflicting dispositions, they had spent many anxious hours in discussion and indecision before they had finally decided to try this new, hazardous move. But Isaac, with the indomitable courage of the pioneer and habit of leadership had won her over, and she true to the faithful, loyal spirit of the pioneer wife, had accepted his decision.

It had required untold courage for her to wave a gay farewell to the two men as she watched them start on their long journey the previous year, realizing the loneliness, the perils and the struggle that lay ahead of them. However, all that was in the past now, all over like a bad dream, the family was reunited once more and they were thankful.

Though no words had been spoken of these things they were thinking, each knew and understood the other's thoughts and so, united again, they lifted radiant faces to each other and their family; the love, the courage, and the understanding they shared so completely shining forth as a challenge to the future in their new home that they confidently hoped and believed held so much promise for them.

"And now, Mandy", said Isaac, "tell me how you like your new home."

"Oh, it's grand, Isaac. It's a beautiful place here, with the green grass and those wonderful shade trees in the yard. I know you and Jim must have worked very hard to build such a good, warm house. But come, let's go inside so you can see Father and Beulah. I guess they thought we needed a few moments alone like this."

The group then went in the house where warm greetings were again exchanged. John Everhart, Mrs. Hook's father, and his second wife, Beulah, had promised Isaac when he left that they would come with the family, they had done their task well and Isaac's handclasp was strong and sincere with thanks and appreciation.

It was a merry group that talked and laughed and busied themselves about the house. Isaac and Jim were anxious to hear news of friends and relatives back home and the others were just as eager to hear all about the experiences of the two men while they had been there, but in spite of all the confusion and interruptions the wagons were soon unloaded. Beulah and Mandy, true to their women's love of homemaking, had insisted on bringing along everything they possibly could to make their new home comfortable and attractive. Feather ticks, quilts and comforts to add luxurious warmth to the rude beds; rugs and pictures to add a bit of color to the dark, drab walls.

Mandy's spinning wheel in the corner by the fireplace and the little chest of drawers she had cherished since childhood gave the humble abode the final touch of home. They did not feel so far away from familiar surroundings and old friends now because these belongings, dear to all of the, seemed to enfold them with loving memories and associations that bridged the distance between the old home and the new.

The extra team of horses and especially the yoke of oxen were a welcome addition to the enterprise. Generous quantities of food, some precious white sugar, coffee, seeds and some extra farm tools also gave Isaac an added feeling of security and confidence that only a true pioneer could appreciate the need for in the Herculean task before him of building for the future by the toil of his hands

and the sweat of his brow.

It was a reverent family group that seated itself around the supper table and listened with bowed heads and folded hands while John prayed; "Heavenly Father we thank Thee for all the comfort and happiness that is ours tonight and as we continue our work here we ask that Thou will give us strength and health and guidance that we may carry on the work in a way that will be a benefit to the world and a joy to Thee. We are indeed grateful for our many blessings and with Thy loving help may we be able to carry on as Thou would have us. Amen."

Thus a new settlement was begun on a lonely prairie in which "Uncle Ike" and "Aunt Mandy" played an interesting and important part as it slowly developed. John and Beulah Everhart lived with the Hook family for there was too much work to be done now to take time out for building. They planned to build a cabin in the fall.

Shortly after Isaac's family arrived Jim again succumbed to the wanderlust in his nature and decided to travel on farther west. He took the team of horses John had brought and a wagon and set out for a new destination, finally locating in Missouri Valley.

The first of May came with warm rains and sunshine and helped Mother Nature to dress the earth in all its springtime beauty. Many kinds of birds built their nests in the white oak trees and scolded these people who dared invade the privacy of their long established homes. In the quiet hush of the twilight hours, the rustling of the leaves, the timid friendliness of timber folk, the wierd howl of the wolves in the distance, there was challenge and encouragement and promise for the family with its hands so full. Each setting sun found them weary but happy, thoughtful but confident. They were the captains of their souls, and the pilots of their ship of life; fearlessly they forged ahead. Each morning they arose rested, refreshed and eager to begin where they had left off the day before.

Isaac plowed up some ground and planted grain and vegetable seeds to provide food for the winter. He hitched the yoke of oxen to the bull plow, a heavy, cumbersome tool, and slowly the virgin soil was broken up. Holding the handles securely he urged the slow beasts along as the furrows turned up black against the green grass in tough strips of sod sometimes 50 feet long. Then it was broken into fine particles with a wooden drag that broke up the chunks of dirt surprisingly well and made a fairly satisfactory seedbed. John made the hill for the corn with a hoe, Frank cropped the kernels and John covered them.

Mandy and Beulah planted long rows of garden seeds; peas, beans, turnips, squash, pumpkin, lettuce, radishes, onions and cabbage. The seeds sprouted rapidly in the warm, moist earth and in a few days tiny green shoots appeared above the ground. Mandy spent many hours in her garden, tending it with greatest care, because here lay her hope of supplying her family with good food all through the summer and far into the winter. Her garden and fruit provided through the summer months were her winter grocery store. The few chickens she had brought furnished eggs for cooking and the two cows supplied the family with milk and butter.

The women and girls made long trips into the woods to gather gooseberries in June and the wild strawberries grew abundantly on the prairie. How good they tasted with the previous white sugar and cream! Next the wild black raspberries ripened and were gathered, the sharp thorns on the bushes seeming to add extra sweetness to the berries.

The men hoed the corn, whistling as they worked up and down the rows unmindful of backaches, so pleased were they over the fine growth the corn was making.

Later the potatoes matured, were dug and placed in a cave in a side hill where they would be protected from winter's freezing temperatures. The combined efforts of the entire family were required to prepare for the winter months. Frank and the girls gathered walnuts, hickory nuts and butternuts in the timber and stored them in the loft of the log cabin that served many purposes. Frank slept in this attic room as was the custom for pioneer boys. The floor was rough for it was made of puncheons and he certainly would have found many slivers in his feet if the soles had not been hard and calloused, tough as leather from their contact with the earth and stones as he never wore shoes during warm weather.

The women searched the woods for certain herbs, dried them, and put them away to be used as medicine. The only apples available were the wild crab apples that were as sour as vinegar but made very good sauce when they were cooked, the cores pushed out and the pulp sweetened. These could be put away in the cave and cooked as needed because they would keep a long time in a cool place. The beans were picked, shelled and put in bags to be carried to the attic. Frank made many trips up the ladder that stood in the corner by the fireplace, the only means of reaching the upstairs room.

Wild plums grew in abundance too and Mandy wished for some sorghum with which to sweeten them and to make some pumpkin butter.

"I'll get some for you, Mother," promised Isaac. "I was over to Isaac Bell's today and he showed me a sorghum mill he is making. It's about finished and he did a good job on it. It is all made of wood and he has dovetailed the cogs perfectly."

"He must be mighty handy at that kind of work," said Mandy. "But will they have enough sorghum to spare, it will take quite a lot for his family."

"He has a large patch of cane and he told me to come and get some when he started cooking it. We'll go over some day."

"I don't need it right away of course and I suppose it is too early to cut the cane anyway. I'll cook the plums a little and store them in a stone jar then we can use them when we get the sorghum."

So one day later on Isaac and the family climbed into the wagon and drove west down the hills to the Des Moines river crossed at the ford, and soon arrived at the Bell home.

Steam rose from the large iron kettle in which the juice from the cane was cooked. Mrs. Bell stirred the sticky mass and Isaac drove the horse that furnished the power to run the mill. It was not the best outfit but they did manage to get the juice out of the cane and make the sorghum and that was the most important thing. They were not used to quick or convenient methods so never thought of complaining. They had more time than money and any invention of their own was a real cause for joy.

Each of the children was given a stick of the cane to chew and while it was a messy treat it was mighty good to the children who never had very much sweet food to eat.

Mr. Bell also showed them a "contraption" he had fixed up to grind meal when their supply ran low. He had taken an oak block about 15 inches in diameter and ten inches deep. The center had been hollowed out by placing hot coals on the flat surface and as the wood was burned it was scraped out and the process repeated until a hollow of the desired depth was made. The corn was pounded by a heavy weight attached to a rope suspended over a cross bar on two poles. A weight fastened on the other end of the rope assisted in lifting the heavy weight. It was a rather slow and tedious process but was faster than rubbing an ear of corn on rough, upraised points of nail holes in a tin lid.

"It surely came in handy one day last week," said Mrs. Bell. "A contingent of soldiers stopped off here just at noon and wanted me to cook dinner for them. I didn't have a bit of meal ready but they said they would be willing to wait if I could fix something for them. So Isaac ground the meal and I mixed up the cornbread and baked it for them."

"Yes, and I thought my arm would break, it got so tired working that weight up and down", declared Isaac. "By the time I got through I wasn't sure if it was such a good invention or not. But the soldiers paid us well for our trouble. They said it seemed mighty good to eat some good home cooking, not that they don't have plenty of good grub but it seemed nice to eat a woman's cooking once in a while."

"Where were the soldiers going and where were they from?" asked Frank who was greatly interested in them.

"They were from Fort Dodge and were on their way to Fort Des Moines, explained Mr. Bell. "They make trips back and forth like that every once in a while."

"What for?" inquired the lad again. "Is it just for fun or part of their job, or what?"

"Well, you see," replied Mr. Bell, "these soldiers were stationed at these forts mostly as a protection for the settlers against the Injuns. This is suppose to be neutral territory here betwixt the neighboring Injun tribes but you can't trust a tricky Redskin too far. However, the white men did come in here and take over their land and while the Injuns did seem to be reconciled to the deal and signed the treaty, I s'pose it's only natural for them to get kinda riled up once in a while when they get to thinkin' about it. The habit of goin' on the war path ever so often seems to be right in 'em anyway and when they get a few revengeful feelings stirred up, they might make it pretty tough for the settlers if they didn't have any soldiers to contend with. They sure don't like those guns."

"Have you ever seen any Injuns?" asked Frank.

"Nope, not since we came, but I guess a friendly tribe travels through the country sometimes so you might see some after a time. I reckon you think it would be exciting."

"Well maybe, but I'd rather see the soldiers. I'll bet they have some good horses, don't they?"

"They sure do., and every one is fast as the wind; long-legged and tough as leather. A soldier's life depends a lot on the speed and endurance of his horse so you can be sure they have good ones and think a lot of them."

"Well, Frank," interrupted his father, "have you learned all about Injuns and soldiers? If you have I believe we had better start for home. He'll talk all day if you will answer his questions, Ike."

"That's all right," declared Ike Bell. "I think they're an interestin' subject myself. We'll get together on it again sometime, won't we, Frank?"

"Sure," answered the boy, "maybe I will have some stories to tell you sometime."

"Quite likely, if you live around here long. Say, Isaac, I figger on going to Oskaloosa to the mill to have some corn ground and get some supplies. Could I help you out with anything?"

"I sure would like to have some corn ground and get some wheat flour and a few other things now, then I could make a trip later on and return the favor. When are you going?" asked Isaac.

"Why, next month, I reckon. We'll be done with the sorghum then and the corn will be ready to grind, it matures early here on the river bottom. I'll see you later on when I decide for sure."

"All right, I'll depend on it then. How much for these three gallons of sorghum?"

"Take it along, maybe you will have something I can use sometime." was the generous reply, typically early settler custom.

The following few weeks were spent with final preparations for winter. Mandy and Beulah cut up the pumpkins, making some of the pulp into pumpkin butter with the sorghum, and cutting some of it into strips then drying it after which it was stored in the attic. Late potatoes were dug and placed in the underground storehouse which was merely a large hole dug in the ground, lined with straw, filled with potatoes and other vegetables, then covered so the frost could not penetrate to the supplies. The men picked the small field of corn and stored it in small log building constructed for that purpose. Some of it was shelled and put in sacks for Ike Bell to take away for grinding.

On the level tract of ground south of the second ravine, the men put up a log cabin for John and Beulah Everhart because the Hook cabin was none too large for the Hook family during the winter when they naturally had to be in the house more of the time and two families are seldom as congenial as one alone. Then the men cut a generous supply of wood and piled it near the houses for convenience when the weather should turn cold and stormy.

Mr. Bell started his long trip the first of November, the weather was still favorable and he planned to be back in about two weeks. He loaded the big wagon with as many bags of his and Isaac Hooks' corn as he could get on because he expected to give part of the meal to the miller for the grinding and would fill out the load with wheat flour, sugar, coffee and other things.

There was only a poor trail to follow and it lead across sloughs and swamps that made the trip slow and tedious for the ox teams, but they made it easier than horses would because the oxen could work their way through swamps where a team of horses would mire down. Nevertheless, some of the sloughs proved too much for the oxen. It was impossible to drive around the sloughs or the traveler would never get anywhere, so he had to drive through them and hope for the best. When the team did mire down and were unable to pull the load out, as they sometimes did, Mr. Bell

would wade out in the water, unhitch the teams and drive them out to solid ground. Then he would carry the load out and pull the wagon out by means of a cable chain hitched to the end of the wagon tongue. It was enough to try the patience of a Saint, but it was the only way in which the pioneer could manage to provide for his family and no sacrifice was too great for them, nor any task too hard for their enormous courage and endurance.

When Mr. Bell returned with his load the settlers were happy and content for now they had plenty for several months. Isaac Hook would take a load on a sled later on with a team of horses which would be a colder trip but a quicker one. He would have to walk much of the way to keep from freezing but he was used to the weather and never worried about the trip.

Winter came and enclosed the lonely prairie in its icy grip. The log cabin was a noisy, crowded, interesting place where the Hook family spent the daylight and twilight hours happily and contentedly. The girls helped their mother with the work and learned to keep house under her efficient supervision.

All the cooking and baking was done in the huge fireplace that served the double purpose of cooking and heating. The fireplace was high and Mandy could have stood upright in it. A pole reached from side to side upon which pots and kettles were suspended with trammel hooks. The cooking was done in heavy black iron utensils and a heavy black skillet was set on the red hot coals for frying food. The baking was done in a "dutch oven" which was similar to a large kettle and had a heavy tight lid. This was set in a bed of coals and then hot coals were heaped over it to hold the heat. Loaves or "cones" of white bread came out of the dutch oven, crisp, brown and delicious, a sight to delight the eyes of hungry folks where cornbread was more universally used. This, too, was baked in the dutch oven.

Cooking all the food by this inconvenient and back breaking method might appear like an uninteresting and tedious chore. But no mental picture of the mother in her homespun dress bending over her kettle of soup or carefully tending her dutch oven, a sweet smile on her face could leave that impression in anyone's mind. It was the mother's task in this serious business of pioneering, to feed her family to the best of her ability with the provisions available, keep them well and care for them as best she could, and encourage and inspire them at all times with kindness and love.

In her soul burned the courage and fortitude of the strongest man, in her eyes gleamed the light of the promise of the future, and in her heart glowed the price in her husband's ability to provide for his family, that kept his ambition and faith unswerving in the gigantic task he had set for himself. In her arms she held the children who would carry on the work they had so nobly begun. Work, hardship, privation, discouragement, yes. But her reward, peace and fulfillment, a duty done wherein she expended the great wealth of her woman's energy and devotion to her loved ones and derived the most complete satisfaction.

Mandy sat in the warm bright glow of the fireplace and knitted or sewed for her family while the children popped corn or learned a few of the rudiments of education from each other or from their father as he sat and smoked his pipe and planned the future with his wife.

Isaac and Frank spent many hours hunting in the timber because they depended on wild game for meat during the winter. With their guns over their shoulders, their powder horns and bullet pouches fastened to their belts, they tramped through

the timber in search of deer, elk, wild turkeys and other game that lived in the woods. Occasionally they speared fish through the ice and brought home pickerel, salmon*, bass, catfish, and other kinds which they could also catch with a hook in the summer.

The ability to shoot straight was a necessity to the pioneer as well as a sport among the boys and men. But ammunition was expensive so most of it was used only for hunting for food or for protection. Indeed the family could have a good supply of fresh meat the year around if the men had the skill necessary to procure it. Just as the pioneer depended on his axe for hewing the logs for his cabin and for fuel, so did he depend on his rifle for protection and to provide food.

Albert Bell wrote an interesting article in which he describes the rifle and axe as the pioneer's coat of arms.

*Although there are no salmon in the Boone or Des Moines Rivers now, the pioneers did catch them in those early days. Gradually the carp became more numerous and finally destroyed the salmon.

Chapter Two

A Pioneer Storekeeper

Winter passed and spring again brought mild weather; the eager family waited impatiently for the ground to dry and be warmed by the sunshine so the crops could be planted. Blue stem prairie grass grew luxuriantly on the prairie furnishing plenty of feed for cattle and horses during the summer months. In places it grew to a height of three or four feet and sometimes it was a problem to find the cows for only their backs were discernible above the grass.

This prairie sod was not suited to the raising of wheat while in its virgin state and had to be plowed under and the grass allowed time to rot before wheat would grow on it. Corn grew satisfactorily on it however so Isaac planted more that spring and broke up another patch that could be mellowing and sowed to wheat another year.

Isaac's house stood on the north side of a ravine that started several rods east and ran southwest a short distance where it was joined by another ravine coming from the southeast, leaving a flat V-shaped piece of land with the point toward the west. The trail came from the southwest, skirted the ends of the ravines on the east, then turned and ran west a few rods where the house stood. From there, the trail proceeded north across Boone River, then to Fort Dodge.

Few people traveled that way that second year and only a few new settlers came to put up their log cabins. Those who did come soon became acquainted with the Hook family and before long this location was designated as Hook's Point. Homeseekers stopped there and talked to Isaac about the country and travelers stopping there, were always invited to stay overnight or at least for a meal, and gradually it became an important and well known place.

They were always willing to share their supplies with others and Isaac, realizing the need as well as the feasibility of starting a store, gradually increased his supplies so the people soon came to depend on him to supply them with the things they needed. He took more interest in the idea of being a storekeeper than a farmer and left more of the farm work to Frank who was ambitious and strong and could do the work as well as his father.

On March 25th of that year 1852, a baby daughter Elizabeth was born in the Hook family and the little log cabin was much too small to serve the purpose of store and home so Isaac had to enlarge his house.

One day two men came along pulling a sawmill on skids with a four horse team; Isaac soon learned it was for sale and bought it from them. Then he looked about for a place to put it. His own claim consisted of the northeast quarter of Section Six but he wanted to put the mill on the north slope of the south ravine near John Everhart's house so he secured another small tract of land consisting of 16 acres where he put the sawmill. The mill not only sawed wood, but had an attachment for cracking corn, the power being furnished by steam for which wood was burned to produce the heat.

Isaac and Frank, with the help of John Everhart, cut black walnut trees and sawed out the boards for the house. The original house stood east and west and the new addition joined it on the west. It was sturdily built and had wood shingles made of thin slabs of the walnut logs. The new room was

also 16 x 24 feet in size and heated by a sheet iron stove, so Mandy felt that she really had a fine home now.

Part of the log house was used for the store which as yet did not require a large amount of space because the demand was small and included only necessities such as gunpowder, lead and food supplies. There were only a few families and their needs were modest because the pioneer was so nearly self-sufficient and used to getting along with only the barest necessities and most important things. But the country was certain to attract more people increasing the business accordingly, so Isaac believed in being prepared to take care of their needs.

Whisky, however, was a prime necessity. Most of the people brought along a generous supply but this could not be expected to last forever so Isaac prepared to supply them. He also built a small barroom across the ravine and kept whisky and beer on hand. Whisky was one of the most dependable of home remedies in those early days, doctors were far away and hard to get when needed, so the fact that the people always kept it in their homes need not be considered a reflection on the characters of those worthy folks who had the grit and the nerve to brave untold hardships and misery with only a little whisky to remove the keen edge of their suffering or help cure their colds and other ills.

The store business was not carried on in a very systematic manner. Many of the customers did not have the money to pay for the things they needed; but few, if any, records were ever kept of unpaid bills. It was kept in the minds of the clerks or, on rare occasions, written on the door with chalk. The people who had the courage to brave the hardships of pioneer life were honest as a rule and paid their debts if humanly possible so no one ever worried about it. If it were not paid with money other things had the same value and they all shared with each other.

Isaac's family was a jolly, industrious one and his home became a social as well as a business center in the community. The only diversion possible was a day or evening of visiting. The grown-ups talked of their plans and hopes and discussed best ways of doing their work. They did not dwell on the hardships of their circumstances, but accepted them stoically, realizing it was unavoidable, and gloried in their ability to rise above the many drawbacks and privations and see the visions of the future. Not being familiar with any other greatly different or better methods of living, they were content with what they had and were thankful for health.

The young folks popped corn, made taffy from sorghum, played games and had jolly times considering the meager possibilities at their command. Frank and Sarah were nice looking young people and popular with the other young folks. Hannah was a plump little girl, always busy and happy, and thoroughly enjoyed the responsibility of caring for her baby sister, which was decidedly more satisfying than playing with her old rag doll that, up to that time, had been her most treasured plaything. No toys were included in the list of store necessities, but the children loved their homemade toys and were happy.

The most exciting experience during that summer was the arrival of the first Jew peddler. His name was Jedediah Marks and his pack was piled high on the back of his horse and the saddle bags were bulging with the small and more valuable articles of his stock. He expected to spend several days canvassing the country around Hook's Point so he made a deal with Mandy for several nights' lodging and meals.

From his pack the girls each selected goods for a bright new calico dress and hair ribbons to match and Mandy selected dress material for herself. Everywhere his bright pieces of goods, rings, pins, watches, knives, mouth organs and jews harps aroused intense interest among the youngsters and even the grown ups so Jedediah carried on a good business and the people enjoyed listening to his voluble explanation of the merits of his wares. Frank bought a jews harp which he learned to play remarkably well, carrying it with him at all times and the familiar sound of his music became a well known pleasure to all who heard him.

This frontier settlement had none of the advantages of education and religion that they would have liked, but neither of these necessities to the taming of the wilderness and the establishment of homes, was neglected. John Everhart was of a scholarly turn of mind and helped Mandy's children with some of the fundamentals of learning to read and write. He owned many books and these were liberally loaned out to them and other children who desired them. Parent's assisted their children until such a time when school could be held regularly for them. As yet the families were too few and too scattered to arrange for a school house so they waited patiently for that time to come, in the meantime using their determination to learn a few things and doing very well.

Prayer meetings were conducted at the various homes under the leadership of John Everhart and they were earnestly and devoutly attended and conducted. The people met because they felt the need of spiritual aid and guidance and their prayers together strengthened their purpose and renewed their faith without which they could never have perservered so faithfully and contentedly on this lonely prairie.

When the spring of 1853 arrived travelers began passing through in increasing numbers and the Hook hotel enjoyed a good business. All up and down the trail the place was well known and people and wayfarers planned to stop there if they were near at nightfall. Mandy had to be prepared to serve meals to an uncertain number of guests at all times which would have been quite a task if she had taken it too seriously. The people of those days were familiar with the limitations of the food supply and did not expect miracles. She enjoyed cooking for the jolly, interesting groups of folks who sat about her table and ate the well cooked meals of meat, bread, beans, dried or preserved fruit and whatever she had, according to the season.

If the crowd almost exceeded the supply sometimes, no one thought anything of it, they managed to find something in a hurry. Neither did she fuss about the small variety with which she must often prepare a meal. She cheerfully cooked whatever she had, seasoned it with the incomparable spice of hospitality, and the guests who gathered around her table ate it with the relish and appreciation all hungry people have when thankful for food and warmth and friendship.

A stage coach line was routed past Hook's Point connecting Fort Dodge and Fort Des Moines and this place was designated as a stage station where passengers could get on or off. The arrival of the stage coach was a special delight to the crowd that was always on hand to view its approach. It came once a week and was an exciting break in the uneventful lives of the settlers. Here was a link with the outside world, bringing news and the precious mail. Isaac was in charge of the postoffice which consisted of an open box about 18 inches long, 8 inches wide and 10 inches deep and was kept under the bed. Few letters went out and few came in but all were of greatest importance and excited curiosity.

At first there were no regular stage coaches. A light buggy or wagon was used in summer and during the winter a common two horse sleigh was used to get the travelers across the snowy, drifted prairie. In short time, however, the four horse Concord coach was put into use and the passengers enjoyed an undreamed of luxury. It had an oval body flattened on top as a platform for luggage. At the back was a triangular, leather covered boot which served as extra luggage space. On the inside of the enclosed body were three seats designed to hold three passengers each and passengers in the front seat faced the back. The driver sat on an elevated seat in front of the covered body which was swung on leather "thorough braces". These braces acted as suspension cables and allowed the coach body to rock in every direction much to the discomfort of the passengers. The coach body was painted in bright colors and was named after some famous person.

Many times the roads were nearly impassible and the driver and horses would be worn out when they came in sight of the stage station, but they always managed to put on a small burst of speed at the last, and came dashing up to the door where they stopped suddenly giving the arrival a sparkle and importance befitting the occasion and thrilling the audience.

People of various professions drifted through Hook's Point, some stayed and some passed on. Granville Berkeley was an important newcomer and made his home at Homer a small town about 4 miles north of here. He was an able lawyer and was very much interested in the advancement of the surrounding country. He visited often with the Hook family and he and Isaac were good friends.

It was through the efforts of Berkeley that the territory of what was later known as Hamilton and Webster counties was surveyed and named Webster county with the site of Homer designated as the county seat because of its geographical location in the center of the county.

Immediately after Iowa became a state in 1846, the work of surveying the land was begun but it took a long time to complete the job. The surveyors were bothered and delayed by the sloughs on the prairie, the slow, tiresome job of clearing the underbrush before making their way through the timber, and there was always the problem of crossing the many streams that flowed through the state. So it was not until in 1853 that the survey was completed and the settlers could establish their claims to their land.

The government had granted the people the privilege of homesteading the land with the right to buy it from the government for \$1.25 an acre. The nearest land office was located at Des Moines and the people had to drive, ride horseback, or walk as many did, to enter their claims. This was so inconvenient that the land office was soon moved to Fort Dodge. Many people naturally traveled to Fort Dodge and a number of them stayed there so this town enjoyed a rapid development.

Homer had a prosperous beginning and if it had not been so absorbed in building itself up it might have thought about getting the land office located there.

Isaac wrote glowing accounts of the possibilities of the timber and prairie land of his adopted home to relatives back home and they, intrigued by the thought of establishing homes in this wonderful new land, packed up their household goods and, one by one, arrived at Hook's Point and took up their claims.

Two of Isaac's brothers came first, Wes and Sarah Hook and their sons Dave and Steve, put up a log house in the fall, down by the river crossing north of the town. Will and Sarah Hook and their children built their log cabin on a 40-acre claim about a mile north of town.

Two of Mandy's sisters and their families took up claims north of the town too. People clung closely to the timber land because there was a handy supply of logs for their cabins, the quickest and cheapest kind to put up, also the ground was in better condition for farming, the prairies being too swampy and wet to raise anything except on the high spots.

John and Emma Everhart Ballard located on a tract of land adjoining Will Hook's on the south. West and Martha Everhart McKinney selected a place a half mile north. These new families gave the community a well populated appearance and with other people taking up claims farther out from the road there was every indication that Hook's Point would soon be a thriving little village.

Isaac found that his meager supply of goods would have to be increased to meet the demand so he began freighting in loads of groceries and dry goods regularly from Keokuk. Early in November Frank loaded a wagon with corn and went to Keokuk where he traded the corn for meal, wheat flour, sugar, coffee, and other groceries. He made the trip easily because the fall rains had been light and the sloughs were not as treacherous as usual and gradually a better road was being made across the country, which speeded travel considerably.

Business was growing so Isaac had to begin keeping some account of his transactions. All bills of goods bought and sold were entered in a big book as they were made. In this load of merchandise Frank had brought back was a bill of dry goods and clothing that was of special interest to Isaac because it marked the beginning of a larger and more remunerative business. Seated by the rough counter, a slab of walnut log, he looked over the bill by the flickering light of the tallow candle.

Mr. Isaac Hook

Bot. of Hamlet, Boner and Co.

3 wool comforts	33	\$1.00
3 wool comforts	50	1.50
1 doz. pocket knives		2.75
1 pair scissors		.30
1 plush cap		1.25
2 plush caps	75	1.50
2 fur caps	1.50	3.00
6 pair coarse shoes	1.15	6.90
1 pair boots		2.75
9 silk handkerchiefs		5.76
		<u>\$26.71</u>
	Add 20%	5.34
		<u>\$32.05</u>
Credit by percentage off		
Old Sock Boots		.80
		<u>\$31.25</u>

Rec'd note at 6 months for above bill Nov. 15, 1853.

Hamlet, Boner and Co.

Isaac marked the prices on the articles allowing for a comfortable margin of profit, mentally figuring that it was going to require more capital to run his business than formerly. He would have to plan to pay cash for most of his merchandise at least because interest rates ate into his profits too much and also made higher retail prices necessary. He could not hope to make very much money at best so would manage to keep prices as nearly within the reach of his customer's flat pocketbooks as possible and depend on volume of goods sold to increase his returns.

Isaac did not spend much time with the sawmill or other farm work, leaving it to the care of Frank who liked working with the lumber better than anything else. Late in the fall a young man, Dan Pointer, drifted into town, stayed at the hotel and he and Frank became good friends. They worked together in the timber, cutting sawlogs and fuel, and went to Keokuk after supplies during the winter. It was a bitterly cold journey, but the two young men were strong and tough, with amazing vitality and endurance so the trip was really a welcome opportunity to get away and see some other part of the country. The team pulled the sled swiftly over the frozen snow, and when the boys got cold from riding they walked beside the sled, their long strides easily keeping up with the fast pace of the horses.

Dan and Frank were entirely opposite in appearance though their dispositions were very similar. Frank was of medium height, with dark hair and blue eyes, the image of his father while Dan was tall and slender, with light hair and brown eyes. Both were full of un, friendly and popular with everyone who knew them. They were always busy because they were good hands at any task they undertook to do.

Their presence at the hotel increased its already pleasant friendly atmosphere. Here the hospitality of the pioneer was practiced as well as in every other home around there; for neighbors and newcomers the latchstring was always out. The wooden doors were fastened by a wooden latch on the inside. A string attached to the latch was passed out through a hole in the door above, which, when pulled from the outside raised the latch. If it was ever though necessary to lock the door it was easily done by pulling the string inside and the door was locked securely. This little latchstring hanging outside the door was the sign of hospitality and the assurance of welcome, and gave rise to the familiar invitation to come "because the latchstring is always out".

During the spring of 1854, Isaac began to complain again that his house was too small to accommodate both his family and business and he talked of building on another room. While he was discussing the subject one day, Dan decided to make a suggestion.

"Why don't you build a brick house this time? They're much warmer," he said.

"A brick house!" exclaimed Isaac, "That would be fine, of course, but where would I get any bricks? They are much too expensive and too far away to haul in here, especially when lumber is so plentiful."

"I'll burn them for you," replied Dan. "I burned lots of bricks back home so I know how to do it. This hazelbrush soil is the best you can get for making bricks. I'd sure like to do it for you."

"I'd like to have a brick house too, but wouldn't it take a long time to burn the bricks? You couldn't work on it steady, you know, because Frank will need you to help him with the crops. We couldn't get them done in time to build the house before winter, could we?"

"Well, no, I don't suppose we could. But we could burn the bricks and have them ready to start the building early next spring so we would have so we would have it done by the time the stage travelers begin coming along faster."

"I like the idea all right," declared Isaac. "I'll see what Mandy thinks about it. I can get along if she can. She needs the room worse than I do so I'll talk it over with her."

When Isaac told Mandy about the good chance they had to have a brick house she was greatly interested at once.

"I would love a house like that", she said. "It would be so warm in winter and so easy to keep clean. I need more room, that's true but I will be willing to get along another year. We will fill a few more ticks with corn husks and if we don't have room for all the people they can sleep on the floor like they did last winter. It isn't often we are so crowded, and I guess folks aren't so particular just so they have a place inside to sleep."

"It's just as you say mother, but I think we can manage all right too, so I'll tell Dan we will figure on the bricks and he can begin making them as soon as he can find time."

Dan was delighted with his new job and went to work immediately to construct the kiln in which to burn the bricks. Every spare moment was spent in the little clearing about 80 rods west of the house where he began making the kiln. The hazelbrush grew in a tangled mass there and he used the soil to make the kiln as well as for the bricks later. It was built like a stove with a chimney and was eight feet in diameter. Dan mixed the soil with water and packed it firmly together to make the walls. There were holes at intervals along the side through which the bricks could be inserted and removed with a long handled prong. It was a slow process, mixing the soil and water to exactly the right consistency, shaping the bricks carefully, then burning them correctly.

Dan was never lonely though. People were greatly interested in his unusual job so most of the time someone was watching him as he worked, visiting with him, and Dan never enjoyed himself more. Gradually the pile of bricks increased so early in the fall Dan had an ample supply ready with which to build a nice house the next spring.

On September 13 of that year another son, William was born in the Hook family and Mandy was indeed anxious for spring to come so she would have more room for her family.

The winter of '54 and '55 was the mildest and most pleasant ever experienced by the settlers. Very little snow fell and very little cold weather came to bring discomfort to those whose log cabins were none too well chinked to keep out the cold winds. Some of the settlers declared that even the mosquitoes lived over which they did not appreciate so much because there was never a shortage of those pests in this land of swamps. On Christmas day a man walked several miles in his barefeet, carrying his shoes and coat

on his arm. The road was dry and dusty and the day was much more like May than December. The people were very thankful for the mild weather for the long cold winters were the greatest dread of the pioneer, adding to their isolation, and increasing their hardships.

Dan started building the brick house late in March for the weather was mild and Isaac was anxious to get it done as soon as possible. It was 16 x 24 feet in size like the other rooms, and extended north and south, adjoining the other rooms on the west. It had two large glass windows in front, on the north end, and one on the west side. Mandy and the girls were delighted with the elegance of this new addition. They made bright rugs for the floor, which was made of some very fine, smooth walnut logs from the mill. Muslin curtains were hung at the glass windows which were the most wonderful thing about it because the other rooms had only muslin windows and had to be boarded up in coldest weather and therefore did not let in much light.

A wide brick wall extended across the front of the building on the north where the stagecoach stopped for passengers to get on and off. The old road was an unhandy, roundabout trail so several of the men decided to build a bridge across the ravine south of the house. They cut logs and set them in the ground then laid heavy planks across them to make a strong bridge. Now the road continued on south from the house instead of turning east, and joined the road again farther south.

Isaac now had a fine, comfortable hotel, the little town was well known and Isaac decided that he should have a sign for his hotel as any business place should have. Accordingly he made one from a board about two feet square and hung it in a frame in which it would swing when elevated on a post. Proudly he painted the name, "The Marion Hotel" on it, naming it after the township. Then he set the following Saturday as the day he wished to hang it up and invited several of the neighbors to come and help make a little celebration out of it. Special occasions were not numerous and everything assumed an unusual importance since there were so few events of community interest.

About one o'clock the crowd had assembled, John Ballard and John McKinney, Wes and Will Hook and their boys, all feeling jolly and obviously expecting a good time. Isaac went to the back of the store where he had placed the sign but to his consternation, it was nowhere to be seen. He ran out of the store demanding to know if anyone had seen his sign. But no one seemed to know anything about it. Isaac was furious because he could not understand why anyone would wish to steal his sign unless they were opposed to it. All his scoldings and threats had no effect on the crowd. They were very concerned about it but could offer no clues as to what had happened to it. Isaac was thoroughly angry and disgusted. He could see nothing funny about it, when the crowd tried to console him, so everyone went home much quieter than when they had come.

After thinking it over a few days, Isaac began treating it as a joke and offered a reward for it. It was brought back immediately by the young men who had taken it and Isaac was his genial, goodnatured self once more. So, another day was set, the sign had been fastened on the pole, the hole dug in which to set it, the neighbors again invited and Uncle Ike was on the lookout for tricks.

But the boys were too many for him again, and while a few engaged him in business in the house the others carried off the pole, sign and all, and planted it out in a cornfield where it could be seen next morning, the

sign waving gaily in the breeze. The neighbors all came back next day, found Isaac taking it all as a good joke, like the jolly person they had always known him to be, so they went out, got the sign and put it up in its proper place.

The hotel then had its name but it meant little to the surrounding community. It had always been Hook's Point and Hook's Hotel to them and it would always be, so they went on calling it by its old name, forgetting the new one.

Frank had displayed more than usual interest in the new house and complimented his mother and sisters on its attractive appearance, making suggestions and helping in a way that was entirely different from his ordinary dislike for anything pertaining to the art of housekeeping.

One evening as they sat around the supper table, at which only the immediate members of the family had lingered to visit among themselves, Frank surprised all of them by a rather bold suggestion from him. But he was full of surprises and unexpected thoughts these days.

"Now that the house is all finished and looks so nice," he began in his very best manner, "don't you think it would be nice to have some kind of a celebration or party or something to break it in, give folks a chance to see it?"

"Yes," replied his mother, "that would be a good idea, did you have anything particular in mind?"

"Well," said Frank, rather uncertainly, "you see, I've just been thinking that -- well --" then he caught Hannah's eye, and blushed furiously.

Nothing ever escaped Hannah's sharp eyes or quick mind and she could discover secrets no one else would ever think of.

"Oh, yes, Frank, I know what you're thinking about," she declared wisely with a toss of her head and a flashing smile. "You're thinking about a wedding, aren't you?"

Frank gave her one of his brotherly, withering looks which missed its mark as usual.

"Why, Frank", exclaimed his astonished mother. "I never thought, but of course, you and Angelina Hill have been going together quite a while but, Frank, you're so young, only 20."

"That's not to young, Mother. Seems like I've been doing a man's work and carrying a man's responsibilities a long time. Angie is 18 and -- well, we have been talking about it and her folks think it is all right and well -- there's no use waiting any longer I guess. And it would be fine to have a wedding here, wouldn't it?" he finished up brightly.

Isaac chuckled. "I must say, Frank, you always were a quiet one, never could figger out what might be going on in your head. Take Hannah, here, she couldn't keep a secret if you paid her. Guess I can't blame you for wanting to get married though, Angie is a fine girl. This country needs more homes, and it's the best thing for a young feller. Now then, had you made any plans about where you were going to live or what you are going to do?"

"Oh, yes. We have all that settled too. Remember that fellow from South Dakota who stayed overnight here a few weeks ago? He told me all about the country out there, said there was all kinds of work there where a new town is being built up. He was going back after his family and belongings. I thought I could do carpenter work out there and maybe in time lay up a little money so I could buy some land. He said it ought to be a good cattle country and a man might make some easy money on the grass lands."

"Oh, Frank," cried his mother in distress. "Do you have to be just like your father, never satisfied where you are and always wanting to move off to some far corner of the earth? Isn't this country new and wild enough for you?"

"I reckon it ought to be," he admitted with a wry smile. "But I'd like to go anyway. I was afraid you would feel this way about it, but you've always been so understanding with father, you moved out here with him and I don't think you have minded it so much. You wouldn't feel too bad if I went, would you? I don't think I could be satisfied until I had gone out there and tried it anyhow. We're pioneers, you know, Mother, this spirit of adventure seems to be in all of us."

"Yes, Frank, I know," she said thoughtfully. "I don't blame you any. It's just me, I s'pose. I can't believe you are so grown up and it seems so terribly far away. But I can see that glint in your father's eye. You won't have any trouble gaining his approval."

Again Isaac chuckled. "No, my boy, 'cause it's all right with me. If I wasn't so tied up with business here I'd like to go along. But I'll have to leave that to the young men. Now, how had you planned to go? And about how much money have you?"

"We planned on going on the stagecoach. I have about \$150.00 saved up. We'd like to start as soon as possible, maybe about the middle of the month. I'll go see Angie tonight and we can talk it over and decide things."

He climbed the ladder to the loft of the log house where he changed clothes, then went out of the house, saddled his horse and rode away to Angelina's home out in the country.

Frank and Angie were married at ten o'clock in the forenoon on Sat. the 20th of June. The Hook house was prettily decorated with Sweet Williams and Honeysuckle and wild ferns from the woods. Frank was handsome in his black suit and Angie was a lovely bride. Dressed in a plain navy blue traveling dress of alpaca, its somber color and dignified style contrasted oddly with her girlish appearance. Her brown eyes were bright as stars and matched the excitement in Frank's, for both were thrilled over the great adventure that lay before them. It was mysterious, fascinating, a little terrifying at times when they thought seriously of the long journey ahead of them but their youthful, reckless spirit accepted the challenge bravely and Angie's sweet confidence in Frank's ability to care for her in any emergency gave him a proud feeling of importance and responsibility.

John Everhart read the marriage vows solemnly and sincerely and the young couple repeated them softly, thoughtfully.

After the wedding the guests, relatives of the couple, showered them with little gifts and good wishes, then a sumptuous wedding dinner was served at noon.

When the two o'clock coach pulled out headed for Boone, then east, the bridal couple and their luggage was loaded on it and they departed among a variety of gay, smiling, boisterous and tearful farewells. All waved until the coach disappeared from sight beyond the second ravine. Everyone tried to talk at once and cover up the tense, sentimental feelings--everyone but Hannah. She stood apart, leaning against one of the white oak trees, twisting her handkerchief, kicking viciously at the tree with one foot while her face wore a stony expression and hateful tears trickled down her cheeks.

Seeing her in this unusual attitude, Isaac went over and said jokingly "What's the matter, Hannah? Don't tell me you haven't anything to say."

With a withering look at everyone, she burst into wild sobbing, and ran swiftly away to hide behind the barn. She did not appear again until the family was seated at the supper table trying bravely not to notice the empty place at the table. Hannah came in, gay and smiling as usual and took her place.

"Well," she remarked to the solemn group, "What's the matter with all of you? Why don't we eat? I'm glad the company didn't eat everything we cooked. I'm starved."

She helped herself to the food and started passing the dishes around and thus helped in her merry way to overcome the loneliness that is so keenly felt when a dear one is absent for the first time around the family table. Her family loved and appreciated her more than ever for her brave bouyant spirit that all of them depended on more than they had ever before realized, to cheer them and console them in moments of stress.

Dan was unusually quiet too. He realized that he had lost a good friend and he would miss Frank like a brother. Isaac seemed to realize that he had not only lost his son but a mighty good helper too and seeing the thoughtful, puzzled look on Dan's face, wondered if he might think of leaving too, now that Frank was gone.

"Looks like I'm left with a lot of work to do so I hope you will stay on here and help," he said to Dan.

"Yeah, I might as well too, I s'pose. Won't seem quite the same to any of us without Frank but I reckon we will have to get used to it. I like it here so it suits me fine to stay on and work for you. Be kind of tough all right if both of us walked out on you. I think Frank figured I'd stay with you".

"Maybe he did if he stopped to think about anything after he took a notion to get married so suddenly," Isaac said with a reminiscent chuckle. "I never saw a quiet fellow such as he get so excited and wound up as he was over that wedding and trip. But I will admit I enjoyed it too, he's just like me, when the old wanderlust starts working on him he won't be satisfied until he travels around and gets it out of his system."

"Well, this country is plenty far enough from civilization to suit me, so I'll just stay here and help tame it down a little more" said Dan. "Guess I'll stroll over to the barroom and see how business is stacking up for the boss. Maybe he has soaked up all the profits by this time. Anyhow I think a game of cards might go well after all the excitement today. I don't take to these weddings so much."

"That's what they all say but just wait, sometime you will tumble too." Just a minute, I'll go along with you."

Lyman Roberts built a small store south of Isaac's place across the ravine and the first influence of competition was becoming manifest to the owner of the first store. As more people settled in the vicinity, there developed a demand for greater variety of merchandise and each time Isaac ordered supplies he added more and different articles than ever before. A few things that were not generally considered necessities found a ready sale among the customers.

In September Isaac made a trip to Keokuk to supervise personally the selection of the articles he wanted. Young Dave Hook, son of Wes Hook drove one team and Isaac drove the other. The wheat and corn crop had both been very good so they took several sacks along to have ground at the mill and to pay for part of the merchandise.

When they returned the last day of September and Isaac unloaded the wagons, he was greatly pleased with the appearance of his store. It filled almost the entire room and the family lived in the frame and brick sections. Along the west and east side of the room, the grocery counter was located, with goods stacked on shelves and in boxes on the floor. Dress material, ribbons, buttons and similar things were placed along the north side while the rear of the store contained the hardware and harness; bridles, halters, saddles and sets of harness hanging from pegs on the wall and hooks in the ceiling.

Isaac experienced a proud, satisfied feeling as he sat at his rude desk, entering the bills of goods purchased, in his account book. Business was really encouraging, the people were getting along better as they brought more land under cultivation and increased their livestock, consequently they were able to pay cash for more of their purchases or at least trade in something that could be turned into cash, which gave him more capital with which to carry on his business.

With his goose quill and ink he wrote an itemized account of his bills from his recent buying trip, two of which represented quite an outlay of money. The harness bill was especially fascinating for every pioneer loved horses and took pride in their harness.

Keokuk, Sept. 20, 1855

Mr. I. Hook - Bought of Grayer, Selkirk & Co.

1 set single harness	\$10.00
2 sets stage harness @20.00	40.00
1 set double buggy harness	26.00
1 set double stage harness	17.00
1 dozen yankee halters	6.00
1/2 dozen hip collars	6.75
1/2 dozen riding bridles	2.38
1 saddle	5.50
1 whip	.65
3 halters @50¢	1.50
	<u>\$105.78</u>

The other was an interesting variety of hardware and groceries.

Keokuk, Sept. 20, 1855

Mr. I. Hook - Bought of J. R. Copelin
Wholesale grocer, produce and commission merchant,

1 keg nails		\$5.00
1 box glass		4.50
48 lts. sash	@6½	3.12
2 box cigars	@2.75	5.50
1 box candy		3.50
2 bbls apples	@1.75	3.50
1 grind stone	26-8	2.08
2 boxes sugar		6.00
½ box tobacco		6.40
1 ball twine		.30
1 doz. cards		3.25
		<u>\$ 43.15</u>

These articles were an indication of the progress of the country. Nails implied that more frame buildings would be put up replacing the log cabins, the glass meant that more houses would have windows that would keep out the flies, mosquitoes and cold winds and allow the light to come into the rooms. How good those apples would taste to the people to whom fruit was a rare treat in the winter time! And Isaac could visualize the joyful surprise of the children when they found a sack of candy among the groceries.

A delightful feeling of contentment stole over Isaac as he sat alone in his store and thought of his home and his people for they were his people. He had seen them come, had witnessed the struggle they had made to establish their homes, and had been a sympathetic listener when they told him of their trials and difficulties. They had asked his advice many times and he gave it, conscientiously and sincerely, naturally he had a personal interest in all of them, and their friendship and loyalty was very sweet to the store-keeper. He was satisfied with his work, the location he had chosen, the future it promised to those whose ambition matched their courage. His crops had been unusually good, he had plenty of feed for his stock, and his family were assured of good food from the garden and store. This sense of security made him feel very rich and truly content.

During October and November the weather remained mild and pleasant, frosty mornings losing the sting of their chilliness as the sun rose slowly made its way across the blue sky. The timber turned from its dark green color to red and brown and gold shrouding the landscape in a cloak of blazing beauty before winter set in with its drab, gray appearance. Gusty winds blew fitfully sending the dry leaves to earth where they piled up on the hillsides and in the valleys protecting the tender flower roots and other plants from the snow and freezing temperatures. The ring of the woodcutter's axe echoed in the timber as he diligently provided fuel for heating his home where he could rest in comfort and enjoy the fruits of his summer's labors.

Flocks of wild geese and ducks flew over on their way to the sunny south, their wild, shrill honking startling the men working in the woods where only the sounds of their axes and saws broke the solemn hush of the wilderness.

Sometimes by keeping a lookout for the migrating birds some of the more alert and skillful marksmen were able to hit those swiftly moving targets and proudly carried home a duck or goose to the envy of the others.

The husks on the corn had opened early exposing the golden ears and some of the old timers predicted that they would have a mild winter, but others were skeptical. "All signs fail in this wild country," they argued. "Can't depend on weather from one day to the next and just because last winter was so mild is no reason to imagine it will get to be a habit. I'm banking up the house with dirt so the floors won't be so doggone cold. Mark my words, one of these days it will be so cold it will freeze your whiskers."

Some believed that they might as well enjoy the weather while it lasted and put off preparations against winter's steely blasts just a few days too long.

Isaac and his family were grouped about the spacious brick room on the evening of the first day of December, unusually cognizant of comfort and well being as the wood burned and crackled in the sheet iron heating stove sending its cheerful warmth to all parts of the room. A stiff wind had come up late in the afternoon, the temperature dropped rapidly causing everyone to shiver with the unaccustomed cold. No one had come to town that evening to sit around the store or barroom and spin yarns so Isaac had closed up business and was enjoying the evening with his children. Will was toddling about on his sturdy little legs, playing havoc with his mother's ball of yarn and teasing the girls while they tried to read. Elizabeth, a dainty little girl three years old, was always quiet, playing by herself, singing little songs to her doll that Isaac had brought back from his last trip. Isaac and Mandy were busy with their thoughts, speaking of their pride in the children and the many activities that occupied their time. It was at times like these that they missed Frank, and seemed to feel that by talking of him they could bring him closer within the circle.

"Frank has been gone five months now and it really seems much longer, doesn't it?" remarked Mandy as she deftly turned the heel on a sock. "I thought I detected a hint of homesickness in his last letter but I suppose I only imagined it. Maybe I wanted him to be homesick hoping he would come back before long."

"I don't think he will be back very soon," declared Isaac. "I thought he seemed pretty well pleased with his work, seemed to be making quite a bit of money and as long as he is satisfied he might as well stay. I'd sure like to see him though. Funny, isn't it, how parents can't quite let go of the children even if they are grown up and able to take care of themselves, we always have that feelin' of responsibility for their welfare that we had when they were small. I reckon it is nights like this though that remind us of how much we need to be prepared against the hazards of weather and hunger and how important it is to be well and strong. But I don't think we need to worry about Frank, he's a levelheaded fellow and a good worker and will get along all right."

"I know Ike but this wind has a lonesome sound and it makes me feel better to talk about him anyway. You always have enough courage for both of us and when mine falters I start leaning on yours."

Isaac gave her one of his most understanding and devoted smiles, "You'd be surprised, Mandy, how often I depend on your courage and fortitude."

The wind increased the strength of its furious attack, and moaned through the trees breaking off small limbs that fell against the house with a startling crash. Isaac went to the door and looked out to discover that huge flakes of snow were falling from the grayish sky and the darkness was as impenetrable as a dungeon.

"It certainly looks like winter has arrived," he remarked to Mandy, "I believe I had better go and put the oxen and horses in the barn. No use making them stay out in such weather, they're not used to it and will be miserable."

"Indeed they will," replied Mandy. "Bring in one of those big chunks of wood for the stove too, we must keep a good fire or it will be terribly cold by morning."

Isaac put on his heavy coat and fur cap and strode out into the storm. He found the horses and oxen huddled close to the south side of the barn trying to escape from the freezing wind but it swirled around everything so there was little protection anywhere outside. As soon as he opened the door they rushed in to the welcome shelter. The cows mooed plaintively from their stalls on the other side of the barn as if apprehensive of the impending storm.

Isaac hurried back to the house, gathering a large armful of wood from the generous pile, trying to shield his face from the sharp particles of snow that stung his cheeks and blinded him in the darkness, guiding his steps by the dim light that shone from the windows. "Whew, but this is sure some storm, worst already that I've seen in a long time. I hope that it blows itself out before morning or we will be snowed in all over the country, the snow is drifting awful fast. I don't like the looks of it at all", he said, stamping the snow from his shoes and hanging his coat and cap on a convenient peg.

"Now Ike, stop worrying," remonstrated his wife. "It'll calm down after while and anyway fussing won't help. The children have all gone to bed and we may as well too. Surely the storm will be over by morning."

But the storm did not abate in the morning. It seemed to increase in fury as the hours passed. The wind blew the snow into great drifts around the buildings and Isaac and Dan had great difficulty in getting to the barn to do the chores. They dug logs out of the drifts to burn in the fireplace of the log room and the blazing fire only warmed the room partially, so the children stayed in the brick addition most of the time where the wind could not penetrate the walls so easily.

At noon of the second day the storm appeared to have reached the height of its frenzy and it was so bitterly cold and the drifts were so deep that the men did not dare venture out to care for the stock for they would surely have frozen. By the next afternoon after nearly three days the wind ceased blowing, the snowflakes diminished in size and finally stopped falling. The sun came out and the terrible job of trying to dig out of the storm was begun. The snow had been driven so hard that together with the freezing temperatures, the drifts were solid enough to hold the men and stock. But it took hours of shoveling before the doors could be opened. Several chickens that had failed to reach the shelter of the barn were frozen and those that did had their combs frozen badly. Nevertheless Isaac found his livestock in better shape than he had really expected and better than others in the country who did not get all theirs in and therefore lost some from exposure. Many sheds and some houses were nearly buried in the snow.

Blizzards of varying intensity continued to plague the settlers at intervals during the winter though none were as severe as the first one. Gradually food supplies began to run short and neither Isaac nor Roberts were able to freight in any over the drifted prairies. Some families had to live for days on corn, ground in a coffee mill and made into coarse mush or bread.

Like many other women Mandy made hominy from the white corn to vary the menu and help stretch out the food supply hoping it would last until more could be secured. The easiest and quickest kind was made with lye. She soaked the kernels of corn in a water and lye solution for 48 hours to loosen the hull. Then she rubbed it on the washboard to remove the hulls. Next it was soaked in clear water to remove all the lye solution after which it was placed in a stone jar to be used as desired.

She made some by another method which did not require lye. It was more work and took longer but when finished it surpassed in sweetness and richness the other kind by far so was well worth the extra effort. Isaac made a hominy mortar from a log 20 inches thick and three feet long which he hollowed out to a depth of 12 inches, making the surface very smooth. Then he fastened an iron wedge into the split end of a stick, putting a tight band around it to prevent the stick from splitting more and making a solid handle.

The corn was washed and soaked in warm water, put into the mortar and pounded with the iron wedge until the hull of the grain was beaten off and the grain broken in pieces. Then the corn was removed from the mortar and dried so that the husk could be blown off leaving the grain clean. Now it was ready to put into a large kettle and boiled for a whole day. Before the boiling process was finished a chunk of fat pork was put into the kettle and cooked with it. The whole mass was then taken out, put into a stone jar until used. When fried to a golden brown in a mixture of lard and butter it was a rare treat to the unfortunate people who had been living on such plain fare, thankful though they were for what they had.

By their ingenuity and tireless efforts, the women managed to feed their families fairly well as long as there was anything they could possibly use. However, some families were very poor and even their corn did not last until spring. They had no money to buy food and there was no chance of making any money during the cold weather and impassable drifts. But somehow others managed to find out about them, possibly because of the close kinship people feel for each other in time of misfortune, divided their meager possessions and all managed to struggle along.

Finally the dreary winter dragged to an end, the snow melted and at last it was possible to get some food, this time from Boone, where enough was secured to last until the storekeepers could make a trip to Keokuk. It was the hardest winter the settlers had ever experienced, causing their interest in this new country to waver at times but when spring arrived with its sunshine and balmy breezes they immediately felt a new surge of faith and confidence rising in their discouraged minds in the peculiar manner of mankind for whom hope springs eternal as long as life lasts.

When the grass turned green on the prairies and the trees budded and the Easter lilies bloomed in their sheltered nooks in the ravines, their trust and hope were completely revived by the elusive promise of the new year, so turning their backs on the hardships and discouragements of the past months they bravely faced the future in true frontiersman style.

Chapter Three

High Tide on the Des Moines River

Isaac had great plans for his little Village and dreamed of the day when stores and dwelling houses would line the road and every acre of land would be claimed, when there would be schools and churches and better roads and every child would enjoy the advantages that were so sorely needed now. It took a long time to accomplish each new step in the development of the country because they were so far from Fort Dodge where all the business must be transacted. Thirty miles was a long distance with a horse or team even in favorable weather and this inconvenience naturally had a direct influence on the speed with which the people could progress.

W. C. Wilson realized it would mean a great deal to Webster City, or Newcastle as the town was then called, if the land office could be moved there from Fort Dodge. Accordingly, he campaigned for a seat in the legislature in the year of 1856 and was elected. Immediately he introduced a bill to divide the county and designated Webster City as the county seat. Judge W. W. Hamilton of Dubuque, president of the senate exerted a great deal of influence toward passing the bill. The new county was then formed with the division line about a mile west of Hook's Point, named after Judge Hamilton, and Webster City became the county seat.

This new arrangement assisted the settlers in entering their claims but no one could secure a deed to his land until the survey was completed. However, their claims were good as gold so they waited patiently until the next year when the survey was completed, and all secured deeds to their land.

After getting the deed for his quarter section of land, Isaac got a special deed for a tract of land which he wished to incorporate into a town. The townships were now established and this location was included in the one which was given the name of Marion. So Isaac laid out the town and named it Marion City after the township. Perhaps he thought this was a more appropriate name but it did not seem to appeal to the settlers for it had always been "Hook's Point" to them and would never be quite the same with another name so they ignored "Marion" and went right on calling it Hook's Point.

On September 19, another son was born to Isaac and Mandy. It so happened that Granville Berkeley and Dan Finch, both lawyers and good friends of the Hooks, came to town the next day and when they heard about the new arrival they congratulated the proud father.

"Won't you come in an' see him?" Isaac asked them as they were conversing in the store."

"Sure, I'd like to," said Berkeley. "Maybe we could help pick a good name for him or have you done that already?"

"No, we haven't," replied Isaac, "we can't seem to agree. All the youngun's want a different name so if you suggest somethin' we might be able to settle it."

"I know what to call him," said Dan Finch, quickly. "What's the matter with my name? I don't think you could find a better one."

"Your name!" cried Berkeley. "Who would want to disgrace the poor child with such a common name as that? Now, I think we should have something more aristocratic, say, like Berkeley."

"Uh, huh, it's aristocratic all right. Just wait until Mrs. Hook tells you what she thinks of it."

The men entered the room where Many and the new baby were, and she proudly showed them her baby son.

"He certainly is a fine baby, Mrs. Hook," said Berkeley. "You have a grand family, three boys and three girls. Ike will have lots of help after a few years."

"Thank you, Mr. Berkeley, I do have a fine family and I have such good help with the girls that I am glad Isaac will have help again some day too. Frank was so good when he was here but I guess he is always going to stay out west." She smiled as she pulled the new baby up on her arm. "Don't you think he should have a pretty good name - he's such a nice, plump baby?"

"Now, don't worry any longer about a name, Mother," said Isaac, "these men have some very good ones picked out for your consideration."

"Indeed, we have," said Dan, "I was just telling these men I'd like to give him my name."

"See here," interrupted Berkeley. "That name may be all right but I'd be very proud if you would name him after me."

"Oh, you absurd men," laughed Mandy. "I'll tell you what I have been thinkin'. We'll name him after both of you. How would that be? We could call him Granville Finch."

"And have everybody calling him Granny for short," exploded Dan. "That would be a great name, I'm sure."

"No, I would call him Finch because that's shorter and easier to say."

"I agree with you Mother," said Isaac, "and if that is agreeable to Berkeley, we will leave it that way."

"Sure, that's all right," responded the amiable Berkeley. "I really think G. F. will make good initials when he is a man, and please take good care of the little rascal so he'll soon be big enough to punch this guy in the nose for me."

When a new settlement is made the few people included therein are of necessity a law unto themselves. Far from any organized government they must settle their own difficulties in the best possible way. They have a code of right and wrong and any trespasser is dealt with severely. By words or fists or guns they fight out their differences and go their separate ways if able. But as the population increases this wild, somewhat savage method of self government cannot continue successfully. Therefore, one of the most important steps in the process of developing that community is the establishment of government, with rules and laws and the power to enforce them properly.

Hamilton county was now well organized and with the townships laid out the next step was the election of certain officials to help in the execution of the laws and to take charge of any other business that might come up within its boundaries. The next spring Isaac received the following notice in the mail when the stage coach stopped on its regular trip from the north.

The State of Iowa County Court
Hamilton County Mar. 12, 1858

Said court having formed a new township named Marion Township bounded as follows, viz. Beginning where the section line between Sec. 14 and 15 Township line between 86 and 87 Range 26 Thence east on said Township line to the N.E. Corner of Township 86 Range 25 thence south to the county line, thence west to the southwest corner of said county thence north to the Boone River, thence up said Boone River to the beginning it is ordered by said court that Isaac Hook be appointed to give notice that there will be an election at the house of said Hook on the fifth day of April next to elect three township trustees, one township clerk, two justices of the peace, one supervisor of roads, also to vote on the question whether the swamp lands in said county shall be used to build county buildings in said county.

Given under my hand and official seal this 12th day of
March A.D. 1858.

John D. Maxwell
County Judge.

The notice caused a considerable stir in the township and all the voters attended the election and cast their vote. This was one of the most important events in the history of the community and every man appreciated the significance of the occasion. There was a profound feeling of security in the knowledge that they now had the title to their holdings and had the laws to protect their rights. It gave the town a new importance.

Every Saturday night a crowd of men came to town for a little diversion after a week of hard work. Some were content to engage in lively conversation in the stores, others preferred to spend their time in the barroom where the little brown jug or the beer keg captured their interest. Others spent the evening playing cards at the rude tables, some for the entertainment, others involving small sums of money. When the weather was favorable the women and children came along and spent the evening visiting with Mrs. Hook in the store, selecting a bright piece of red calico for a dress or a new hair ribbon to adorn the daughter's long braids.

It was a peaceful, industrious place where the dense timber still extended to the west side of the road, except for the small clearings that had been made by the people, and the prairie stretched out to the east and south where the rank, blue stem prairie grass waving in the breeze, camouflaged the sloughs with a deceptive appearance of solid, tillable ground.

It was an orderly town too, people realized the demoralizing effects of quarrels for these hard words could never be quite forgotten by serious minded people. And yet, it would be entirely too contrary to the traits of human nature, if the community could go on and on without someone falling from grace and committing some unpleasant offense. Therefore, just when everything appeared to be working out perfectly for the people, they were

stunned by a catastrophe that struck with the speed and force of lightning, shattering the peaceful tranquility of the evening with the horror of the tragedy.

George Smith and Charles Gatchell, two lumberjacks who had been cutting logs for several months in the nearby timber, came to town on Saturday evening, a habit of long standing, and were in Isaac's store making a few purchases. They were old friends and had worked together on the best of terms many times.

In the course of the conversation Isaac mentioned the fact that he had sold some fence rails for them, which they had cut in partnership. Isaac often acted as salesman for his customers; if they had something to sell they told him about it, and, seeing a great many people as he did, was often able to make a deal for them. When Isaac offered them the money the men go into an argument as to the fair division of it.

In the past they had always been able to settle their business deals quickly and satisfactorily, but perhaps each had a little streak of hot temper or contrariness which under the strain of hard work, ran away with his better judgment. While the hard labor they did toughened the very fibers of their being, it also tended to strain their nerves to a high degree of tension, causing them to lose their common sense and conception of right and wrong at times, therefore making compromise difficult.

There was an equal number of oak and walnut rails in the pile; Smith declared he had cut all the walnut rails which were worth more than the oak, and for this reason wanted more than half of the money. Gatchell was just as determined to collect half of the money since they had always divided it evenly before and he could see no good reason for making a difference this time.

"I've given you the long end of the deal a lot of times before and you know it so what are you hollering about, anyway?" Gatchell asked disgustedly.

"Well, this is different," explained Smith. "You cut oak rails 'cause they was easier and I cut the walnut becuae they are worth more. We talked about it at the time so if you are just too doggoned lazy to work you don't need to try to collect the money someone else earns."

"Call me lazy, do you?" cried Gatchell. "I ought to sock you for that."

"Well, why don't you? Maybe you would feel better if you got some of that orneriness out of your system. Maybe I could knock it out of you."

"Oh, you think so? Well, go ahead but take that first and see what you can do about it." So saying Gatchell knocked Smith down.

It had all happened so quickly that the people in the store hardly realized what was going on until the two men were fighting in earnest. Smith got up and hit Gatchell a telling blow, but Smith, being the smaller of the two men, did not stand an even chance and was soon getting the worst of it. Isaac and Dan Pointer decided it was time to stop the fight so grabbing Gatchell they pulled him off Smith.

"Now you two young fools had better go outside and cool off. If you want to fight, find some other place to do it, but don't be doing something you will both be sorry for," Isaac said and gave the men a vigorous shove out of doors.

Outside they were followed by Dan who went with them into the barroom where they lined up at opposite ends of the bar; young Dave Hook was acting as bartender in Isaac's absence.

"For gosh sakes, what's the matter with you two gents? Tree fall on you or something?" Dave asked good naturedly.

The men only glared at each other and said nothing so Dan explained.

"Oh, they had a little altercation over at the store bout some fence rails. Smith figured he ought to have more than half of the money 'cause he cut the best logs."

"Yes, and I had too," declared Smith. "This big bully trying to collect on another man's work don't go over so well."

"Don't say that again," warned Gatchell. "Maybe another black eye will remind you of the times I've helped you with jobs that was too much for a runt like you. I wasn't no big bully then, was I?"

Both men doubled up their fist again preparing to renew the battle but Dan took each in a firm grasp and said very sternly and positively: "Now look here, you two fightin' roosters. I got other things I'd rather do than stand around here and pull you off each other's necks. If you want to kill each other off, I don't care, but get out of here to do it."

The angry men looked at one another with blazing eyes full of hatred, then Smith turned suddenly and left the room. The tension relaxed as the men picked up their conversation where they had left off and Gatchell ordered a drink.

As Smith stepped out of the door he noticed a gun standing against the wall. The gun was a long barrelled shotgun, belonging to Olaf Ferlen who had stopped in on his way from a hunting trip to his home in Missouri Bend, southwest of Hook's Point. Smith picked it up and discovered that it was loaded and capped. Without stopping to think what he was doing, with only his seething fury governing his actions, he whirled around, leveled the gun at Gatchell and fired.

Gatchell threw up his hands and fell on his knees crying, "I'm shot! Oh, why did you do it?"

The men standing nearest him helped him up and put him to bed on a rude bunk in the back of the room. There was no doctor near and nothing could be done for him, for he had been shot in the left side just below the heart and died in about 25 minutes.

The news was at once conveyed to Webster City where a warrant was issued for Smith's arrest and Sheriff Leonard was sent to execute it. Smith did not try to escape and was taken to Webster City before Judge Maxwell for preliminary examination. After the evidence had been carefully considered, George Smith was held for the murder of Charles Gatchell.

Gatchell was buried at the west side of the five acre plot of ground north of town which Isaac had donated for a cemetery. He was the first person buried there, the fence had not yet been built around it and when this was done, it was discovered that the grave had been made too far west and so did not lie in the allotted ground, but it was never changed.

Smith was confined at the home of Sheriff Leonard until the next spring when he succeeded in escaping and was never heard from again although the country was searched for miles around.

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Thus this dark chapter in the history of the little town was closed. It had a steadying effect on the people and possibly exerted a profound influence on the dispositions and actions of the inhabitants for many months to come by reason of the stark horror of the tragedy.

Gradually the incident passed out of the minds and thoughts of the people for there was nothing to be gained by brooding over the mistakes of others; their own affairs were more important and in need of attention. Just as they had settled down to comparative security and peace of mind concerning their future the fates seemed to turn against them in a most discouraging manner.

As yet most of the settlers were located along the river, their claims extending only a few miles on either side because of their desire to remain as close as possible to the fuel supply and the fact that the timber soil was more satisfactory for farming than the swampy prairie. The sawmills and gristmills were located on the rivers and for convenience' sake the people did not wish to be too far from them. However, an uneasy feeling took possession of the settlers as a rumor began circulating that their claims might not be valid after all. It concerned those who had settled within a radius of five miles from the Des Moines River.

They had homesteaded their claims, paid for them as soon as the survey was completed, and received a deed establishing their ownership. In August of 1846, the Federal Government had made a grant to the state of Iowa of all odd numbered alternate sections of land along the Des Moines River which were to be used for the purpose of making the river navigable. The claim was generally believed to extend only to the Raccoon Forks at Des Moines, but the Des Moines Navigation and Railroad Company to whom the grants were made contended that the claims extended to the north line of the state.

This claim was sustained by the General Land Office part of the time and denied other times. During the times the land office held against the company, settlers were permitted to keep their land. Then when the ruling changed, the Navigation Company would attempt to put the settlers off the land and thus a vicious conflict arose that lasted for many years.

If the settlers took their troubles to court, they usually lost so, in defense they formed themselves into a society to support each other and to prevent eviction. When the officers came to remove the land owners from their homes, they were met by force and driven off, or if they did succeed in turning some family out, a group would gather as soon as it was found out, and put it back in again.

The agents representing the Riverland Company were torn between loyalty to their job and sympathy for their victims. Some of the settlers had been cutting logs on section one, father east, and hauling them to

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sawmill. Harry Baxton, an agent, was sent to the mill where he marked all the logs and instructed the mill owner not to saw them into lumber. Infuriated by this brazen act, about 150 men from miles around, formed a lynching party. A group was delegated to arrest Baxton and bring him to Lyman Robert's store where the others were waiting.

Zeb Mosley, captain of the mob, explained their purpose to the puzzled agent.

"We're gettin' mighty tired of fellers like you comin' around here tryin' to take our property away from us, and we're not goin' to stand for any more of it. We'll make an example of you and maybe any other feller who wants to come and start somethin' will think twice before he does it. Get the rope, boys, and let's get this over with."

Baxton, feeling that he was helpless to escape or to persuade the men to change their minds, turned to Roberts and said, "Here is my wallet and some papers I wish you would send to my wife at Des Moines. Send word to the boss about this and tell him they will absolutely have to find some other way to straighten out these difficulties. This only makes the situation more intolerable and doesn't accomplish anything. When you send word to my wife, tell her not to take it too hard, it was a crazy job to undertake in the first place and I have no one to blame but myself. Tell her I tried to be brave and take my medicine like a man."

Turning to his captors he said, "Well gentlemen, let's get it over with, as you so aptly put it."

The crowd had stood quietly watching as Baxton talked to the storekeeper. The leader threw the noose around Baxton's neck and started to lead him away to the secluded spot which they had selected for their gruesome deed. But the sight of the rope and the realization of the awful thing they were about to do had cooled the enthusiasm of some of the less radical members of the mob. Likewise, the amazing courage of the man had won their respect and the idea of hanging him like a despised, cowardly thief was too much for even their injured feelings.

The memory of another man who had died not long ago by the action of one of their fellow men in a fit of unreasonable anger, was still sharply outlined in their recollection; step by step as they walked along the whole idea became more distasteful to them. Finally one of the men hurried up to the group leading the agent and said, "Stop here, boys. We're not goin' on with this. It won't do any good. After all, we are supposed to be a civilized people, living in a law-abiding country. If we do this we will only have a lot to regret all the rest of our lives and the Land Company will be down on us worse than ever. Take the rope off him."

A few of the men argued about it, but the majority had begun to see the futility of such an act and all were beginning to feel a trifle sick about the whole thing anyway so they agreed to let him go.

"All right, Baxton, we'll let you go but only on our terms," the captain said. "You get out of here in 15 minutes and don't ever come back again, if you do, you won't get away next time. Now, beat it!"

"Thanks boys," cried the relieved Baxton, grabbing his things from Roberts. "I'll be gone in plenty of time and you don't need to worry about my coming back again. There ought to be some other way by which I

can make a living, if there isn't I might as well starve to death as be hung." He jumped on his horse that one of the men had led up to him, and was gone like a flash down the road in a cloud of dust.

"And that's that," remarked one of the men, rubbing his hands together as if to wash them of the whole miserable affair. "Wonder what they'll try next."

They had not long to wait.

For some time the Navigation Company had been considering the idea of sending a steamer up the river to prove their contention that they had made the river navigable and make valid their claim on the land adjoining the river. The excessive rainfall that spring added to the melting snow seemed maliciously to play right into the hands of the Riverland Company and against the settlers. As if the hard winters of '55 and '56 had not been enough to discourage even the most courageous person, it was obvious that the weather was trying another scheme to test their patience.

The rains had started early so that only the high ground could be worked and grain sowed or planted for the sloughs were overflowing. The creeks were bank full and every few days when another cloudburst deluged the country, they overflowed their banks and spread out over the adjoining land. The Des Moines River was broad and deep and swirled along in torrential fashion when the creeks unleashed their volume of water on the river's already swollen, muddy currents.

The Riverland Company quickly realized that now was a golden opportunity to send a steamer up the river if they ever expected to do it, so early in April they put four men in charge of the steamer, Charles Rogers, and started it on its voyage up the floodlike waters of the Des Moines River. It was a slow trip, this first attempt, because with the river out of its banks in many places it was difficult for the crew, unfamiliar with the river bed to chart any course.

On the first day of May in this year of 1858, the steamer reached the vicinity of the Bell settlement west of Hook's Point. Residents of the river bottom farms heard its shrill whistle long before it appeared around the bend from the southwest. Mrs. Fitch was visiting at the home of Mrs. Ike Bell, Jr. that afternoon and when they heard the whistle they knew it was the steamer they had been hearing about. The ladies hurried down to the river bank to watch this strange spectacle; little Ab Bell had a hard time keeping up with them for he was not yet three years old and could not travel as fast as the excited women.

When they reached the shore of the river they sat down on some logs near the bank to watch. Ab had hardly recovered his breath from his race and was just beginning to enjoy the unbelievable sight, when a man passing by paused to watch the event and sat down on the other end of the log upon which Ab was sitting. This caused the log to teeter up and down perilously at times and Ab's childish glee during this important time was spoiled by his fear of being catapulted from the end of the log into the dirty, surging water of the river.

The crew of men on board the steamboat waved gaily to the spectators on the river bank and seemed to be enjoying the attention they received and the interest they aroused by their daring venture. Slowly they made their way up the river and disappeared around the bend farther up, where

the Boone River emptied into the Des Moines.

News of the momentous event spread rapidly and the people regarded it gravely. Their cause would be even more hopeless if the navigation of the river should become an established fact. Their only hope lay in the possibility that during normal seasons the depth of the water would not be sufficient to carry the steamer along so the project might not be a success.

Meanwhile the rains continued; it was impossible to go anywhere without having to cross the sloughs that no longer were scattered here and there over the prairie but seemed to have merged into one. Only the high places remained solid and passable. Teams and wagons mired down in the sloughs if the drivers attempted to cross them which made it necessary for them to take a circuitous route that added many weary miles to any trip. Unless wagons were needed for hauling something, it was easier to walk a moderate distance.

Nevertheless, everyone took a philosophical attitude toward the situation which helped to relieve the strain and inconvenience to a great extent. When a man approached a slough, he spent no time trying to find a favorable place to cross, but removed trousers, and shoes at once and waded into the water, often having to go through this performance a half dozen times while traveling as many miles. If the ladies wish to go visiting they had to meet the situation as gracefully as possible for remain at home so they dressed for the occasion and went merrily on their way.

The steamer, Charles Rogers, arrived at Fort Dodge in due time and the settlers regarded its successful trip anxiously. Slowly they saw their hope of holding the land claimed by the Navigation Company growing more dim.

Added to this was the inevitable consequence of the constant rains on the few acres of crops they did have. Wheat fields that had been started on the high ground were badly damaged by red and black rust for in the intervals between rains the sun shone out with intense heat and its harmful effects resulted in nearly a complete failure of both the oats and wheat crop. It required all the optimism of an early settler to keep cheerful during those trying days.

The Des Moines River backed up as far as Sulphur Springs, about a quarter mile west of Hook's Point, from which a steady trickly of yellow water seeped out from the rocks the year 'round. One Saturday afternoon, three men, Moon, Whitehead, and Bowman, who lived along the river, rowed their boat up the ravine as far as the spring and continued on foot to town. They made a few purchases at the store and spent the time visiting with other of the Saturday night comers. At 12 o'clock the business place closed and the men started home. Isaac and Dan lingered a while, sweeping out the barroom and setting it in order for the Sunday holiday. As they reached the door of the hotel, Isaac stopped suddenly and listened intently.

"Hear something?" asked Dan.

"I don't know, for sure," answered Isaac, "I though I heard the sound of voices down in the timber."

"Maybe those men from down that way are feeling their oats a little," said Dan, "but I didn't think they were drinking too much, did you?"

"No, I ain't never seen them fellers really drunk at any time. They never drink much except in a sociable way. The air is so clear tonight and with no wind their voices carry quite a distance. They were probably laughin' over some little joke they heard. Might as well go on to bed, I s'pose."

"Yearh, I can't hear anything. Maybe you just imagined it," replied Dan as he stepped inside the house and struck a match to light the candle. "Anyhow, there are three of them, if they run into any trouble surely one could come up."

"I guess so. Might as well fergit it."

At five o'clock the next morning, Isaac was awakened by someone knocking loudly on the door. He dressed hurriedly and opening the door found his brother Will standing there with a broad grin on his face.

"Wat do you want so early on a Sunday morning?" Isaac inquired.

"I want you to come and help me get those three monkeys out of the trees down in the timber," explained Will.

"What monkeys in what trees? Are you crazy?" asked Isaac.

"Why, those three fellers who was here last night, Moon, Whitehead, and Bowman."

By this time Dan had joined the men and when he heard this he exclaimed, "Say you were right, you did hear somebody calling last night."

"Guess I did after all. But what's the matter with them? What are they a doin' up in the trees? How did they get there?"

"Well, they got in their boat last night and rowed out into the water but suddenly the boat struck some old tree trunk or limb under the water and upset the boat. They can't any of them swin more than a few strokes but it just happened there were quite a few trees standin' there in the water, you know how it is, kinda thick timber there, so each of 'em managed to get to a tree and climb up on the branches and they've been hanging on to them all the rest of the night. Golly, you oughta see 'em. It's the funniest sight I ever saw. But I reckon we better be trying to rescue 'em, they're getting' pretty tired of hanging onto those trees, but how're we goin' to do it?"

"H'm, let's see. I s'pose the best thing to do would be to carry that little canoe of mine down there and we can get them out one at a time. Lucky thing that Old Indian came along and insisted on trading it to me for that runt pig, though I didn't know what in tarnation I'd ever use the boat for."

They went out back of the barn and got the canoe, a small light weight affair, and started out, two of them carrying the boat and the other the paddles.

"How did you happen to find them?" asked Dan. "You couldn't hear them from your place."

"Oh, I went out in the pasture to get my driving horse 'cause we were plannin' to go visitin' today to them new folks out east, but the

fence was down and he got out some time during the night so I was out lookin' for him. I happened to go down that way and I heard them men talking and I sure wondered what a bunch of fellows was a doin' down there that early in the morning."

"Bet they were glad to see you." Dan said.

"Yeah, they sure was. Made 'em kinda sore though when I laughed at 'em but I couldn't help it, they looked so funny. Well, here they are, now ain't that a sight for you?" chuckled Will.

Dan and Isaac heartily laughed at the men perched comically in the trees and Dan, unable to resist such a good opportunity to tease shouted, "Ten cents to see the monkeys, come right up folks, they're perfectly harmless. They can't swim anyway so they can't reach you. Only ten cents to see them and well worth the money."

"It may be a joke to you," returned Bowman, trying not to lose his temper. "But it ain't to us. You ought to try hanging onto a tree for about six hours out here in the dark over all this dirty water."

"It's a funny place to take your Saturday night bath, all right, good thing it's warm weather," said Isaac. "It looks like you fellows are going to have to learn more about swimmin' or boat rowing if this high water keeps up. Well, Dan, think you can handle the job?"

"Sure, this will be fun."

He paddled out to the nearest tree where Moon was stranded, got him into the canoe and rowed him to the water's edge. In a few minutes all three men were safely ashore.

"Whew, but my arms are stiff and sore from hanging onto that big old walnut tree," said Whitehead. "Bet I walk where I want to go after dark next time or stay home."

"Me, too." declared Moon and Bowman.

They thanked their rescuers heartily but Will looked very downcast and unhappy.

"Sure, you're all right now but how about me when I get home? I s'pose my wife's got the chores all done and is a waitin' breakfast and havin' a fit 'cause I ain't home yet. She wanted to get an early start today and I haven't even found my horse yet."

"Gosh that does put you in a bad spot all right," daid Moon thoughtfully.

"Tell you what I'll do," promised Bowman, "it was really my fault this happened, 'cause I talked these men into coming with me and it was my boat. You know I've got a dandy watermelon patch the old river ain't got and don't figger it will. You tell your wife when they get ripe, I want her to invite her lady friends in some afternoon for a quilting or something and I'll furnish watermelons for the treats; do you think that will squire it up?"

"I suppose so," Will answered with a twinkle in his eye," and Dan and Isaac can come up and we'll get our share out in the back yard."

"Indeed we will," said Dan, then touching Will on the shoulder, pointed up the timber, "What's that I see over in that hazelbrush thicket? Looks like a skinny old driving horse to me."

"That's the best drivin' horse in these parts, young feller, and don't you fergit it. Between you and me, he's been there since we came with the boat. But it's easier and safer to have Bowman bring the melons up to me than fer me to swipe 'em." Will laughed heartily as Bowman understood the trick that had been played on him.

"You old double crosser, you," Bowman said, "I might have known you were up to one of your tricks. But you're welcome to the watermelons anyway, though I wouldn't feel sorry if they made you sick."

"I'll take a chance any time, so bring plenty," Will replied as he started toward his horse.

The men then separated, going their respective directions toward home.

Meanwhile the steamer had tarried too long at Fort Dodge; the crest of the floodwaters passed and though the stream was still of unusual depth, it would not carry the boat over the more shallow places. Thus the plan for navigating the river had to be abandoned and the settlers felt a little easier though they realized the battle was not yet won in their favor.

As the days grew gradually colder and snow flurries became more numerous the people began to understand more fully the hard winter they were facing as a result of the wet summer. The corn crop was but little better than the oats and wheat; as a result there was a shortage of flour and meal for human consumption as well as feed for the stock. Prices were, naturally higher and money was more scarce than ever.

Another thing that worried the parents of the community was the lack of a school house so their children could get at least a fair education. They had confidently hoped that by this winter they could build a school house, hire a teacher, and send their children to school for several months. Since this was now financially impossible they had to postpone it a while longer but they could not give up the idea entirely.

John Everhart had passed away the previous winter and his log cabin south of town was empty so the people decided to use it for a schoolhouse and have a four months term of school. The men made some rude seats of slabs of logs and fastened short legs on them. Other benches a foot higher served as desks. Books were none too plentiful so two or three pupils had to use the same one. The teacher prepared extra material to supplement what was available and in some miraculous way the pupils learned the fundamentals of reading, writing, arithmetic and spelling; the most necessary subjects at that time.

The pupils did most of their work on slates and there was a constant squeak and scratch of the slate pencils as the students struggled with spelling words and numbers. Hand writing was considered an art and was taught seriously. The teacher set the copy by writing a sentence at the top of each sheet and when the pupil, using his goose quill pen, had finished the sheet, it was put into a book.

The men took turns hauling a load of wood to burn in the fireplace to heat the cabin and the children warmed their chilled toes by the cheerful

flames when they arrived on cold mornings. Their lunches consisted of the plainest fare, molasses and cornbread most of the time with sometimes a few dried apples for variety. They rarely had meat but whenever a father or brother was lucky in hunting, they had a delicious piece of venison, or rabbit, or turkey meat.

It was a discouraging winter all the way through. Had it not been for the generosity of those who luckily had plenty, some of the people would certainly have starved. Some of them, without food or money, dreaded to ask others to divide their meager supply with them, and in their frantic state of mind, did crazy things.

Isaac had a small corncrib across the road from his store and he noticed that the corn seemed to be disappearing rapidly although he was trying to use it frugally. He thought someone must be taking it and he decided to catch the guilty one if possible. One evening he concealed a wolf trap in the corn and the next morning walked aimlessly over toward the crib with his axe as if planning to cut some wood. From a distance, he noticed a man standing awkwardly by the pile of corn, but he didn't go nearer, continuing on his way as if he hadn't seen any one.

Then the man called out, "Well, Uncle Ike, I guess you got me."

Isaac walked slowly over to the man, freed his hands from the trap, and said very gently, "This makes me feel very bad. I knew you were hard up but I didn't suppose it was this bad. You ought to know you don't have to steal, we don't let people starve here if any of us has anything to spare. Here, give me your sack and we'll fill it up."

The man was nearly speechless with both shame and gratitude. "I'm awful sorry about this too, honest I am," the man said as he rubbed his badly chafed wrists, "but I owe so many people I didn't know what to do. I don't know when I can ever pay back all I owe now."

"No use to worry about it, times will get better sometime so you can pay your debts or work them out," Isaac said consolingly as he tied the sack with a piece of twine. "And remember, if you need corn again, come to the house and ask for it, don't steal it. We have to stick together in times like these. A man never knows when he might need help too."

"Thanks, Uncle Ike, I'll never forget this and if I can ever do anything for you be sure to let me know."

"I will," Isaac promised the man as he helped him lift the sack to his back.

The man never stole anything again for he was not a thief at heart nor from choice, but a hungry family will cause a man to do many things against his better judgment. A helping hand over a rough spot like this gave such poor people a fresh start, faith and courage, and kept them going. People were poverty stricken so much of the time through no fault of their own that others regarded their resultant misdeeds with tolerance rather than anger.

The best workers and managers had a hard time making a living because they had such poor tools with which to work. They could not hope to cultivate large fields because their methods were too inefficient for large scale production; they raised only what they needed for food and feed for the stock, leaving none to sell.

But as surely as the morning follows the darkest night, and sunshine the rain, and hope springs eternal in the hearts of mankind in the face of the greatest defeat; so spring again arrived and the settlers straightened their weary shoulders and started another year. They managed to get enough seed to sow and plant their fields, the weather continued favorable, the crops looked fine once more and the sturdy pioneers felt that better times were just around the corner.

Chapter Four

The Coming of the Stuart's

A hot July sun was blazing down on the earth with all its noon day violence but it failed to penetrate the heavy foliage of the willow trees beside a small stream where a family group had paused to rest from its travels and eat the mid day meal. When the camp chores were finished they rested for a time under the cool shade of the trees. These travel-stained and weary members did not tarry long, however, as they traveled slowly and had to keep moving if they would reach their journey's end soon.

"How much farther is it, papa?" asked a boy of seven years as they prepared to continue the trip. He was barefoot and tired and sleepy.

"Not much farther, son. We'll get to Boonesborough tonight and we should reach Hooks' Point tomorrow afternoon or evening. It's been a long, slow trip for us but you've been such a little man about it all the time, you aren't going to give up now, are you?"

This was the Stuart family. Dr. Alanson Stuart, his wife, Mary, and their six children. Angie and Mary Jane, the oldest girls were 19 and 18 years old, respectively. Clara was 12, Minnie 10, Dick, the boy, seven, and Eva, the baby as she was affectionately called, was three.

Mary Stuart and Mandy Hook were sisters and the Stuart family was on the way to Hook's Point to make a home. Mandy had written to them to come and be with the other sisters and also for the reason that they needed a good doctor so badly since none was nearer than Dr. Lewis of Boone.

Dr. Stuart had owned and operated a store at Montrose, Iowa, and practiced medicine. He had always dreamed of sometime practicing his profession in a new country where a man could do so much for suffering humanity; where he could feel that his work would really be a great help in the progress of his country, more than it would be in a better established place. Ownership of the land was in dispute at Montrose so he could not get a clear title to his property so he decided that this was certainly his long awaited opportunity to secure a good location. Mary's desire to live near her sisters also made the move especially appealing.

They sold their store building and most of the merchandise but loaded generous quantities of groceries and other things they would need into a covered wagon along with their household goods. The wagon, laden to capacity, had scarcely room for Dick, Minnie and Clara to ride in it. Eva rode on the high wagon seat between her parents. Angie and Mary Jane had walked all the way and driven the four cows and two calves. Their bare feet were calloused from walking and tanned a dark brown from the wind and sun, while large "slat" sunbonnets protected their heads from the hot sun. They walked along with a swinging stride, easily keeping up with the slow, lumbering gait of the ox teams.

Day after day the little procession had wended its way along through sudden showers and hot sunshine and now, after 13 days was nearing its destination. When Dr. Stuart cracked the whip over the backs of the oxen and shouted, "Come on, Bogan and Jerry; wake up, Duke and Matt," the wagon creaked into awkward motion as the wheels slowly turned; the canvas flapped in the light breeze, and the wagon lurched along over the uneven trail.

"You're just like Santa Claus ain't you, papa?" asked Eva in her sweet, childish voice, "only I guess he had more reindeer than we have oxen, didn't he?"

"Of course he did," said Dick with the superior knowledge of his seven years and he was very tired of riding in the wagon anyway. "He had eight reindeer and he didn't hitch them to any old such a slow thing as this old wagon is. He hitched them to a sleigh and dashed away, oh, ever so fast."

"Yes, but we couldn't have a sleigh now 'cause its summer time and Santa's reindeer couldn't pull such a heavy load as this anyway, could they papa?" "No, I reckon not, baby," answered the doctor, then turning part way around asked, "How are the girls coming with the cattle, Minnie, can you see them?"

"Yes, they're coming along all right," she answered looking out through the back curtain of the wagon. The girls were walking along, absorbed in conversation as usual, their long full skirts swishing about their legs and their toes stirring up little clouds of dust. Since they were little girls, they had been inseparable companions so found many things to talk about, happily passing the weary hours of their journey.

The evening camp was made just at the outskirts of Boonesborough. Dr. Stuart unhitched the oxen, watered them at a small creek, and picketed them where they could graze on the grass that grew in abundance. Dick and Minnie gathered small sticks of wood for a fire and Mary stirred up the cornbread which she baked in a large iron skillet over the hot coals. Angie and Mary Jane milked the cows, and with the fresh milk, cooled in a pail of cold water, cornbread and dried apple sauce, the tired family satisfied their hunger and made preparations to spend another night out under the stars.

The older girls slept on the floor of the wagon. Mary hung rag carpets around the side of the wagon and she and the Dr. and Dick and Eva slept on blankets spread on the ground under the wagon.

The next morning the Dr. and his wife were awake early and hurried the family around with their work so they could get an early start. The end of the journey was near and they were impatient to reach it.

Angie went to get the cows but in a few minutes Mary Jane heard her calling, "come here and help me. I can't find Polly anywhere."

Mary Jane ran over where Angie was waiting for her. "Are all the others here?" she asked.

"Yes, Pansy, Topsy and June are here and the calves, Pat and Mike, but I can't find Polly anywhere." Lowering her voice, she asked, "Are you sure you tied her good last night? You know, papa told us to be careful about that."

"Of course I did," retorted Mary Jane. "I wouldn't take any chances on having to chase after any of these critters, would I? Goodness knows, I get enough walking every day."

All the family was told of the calamity and a search started. After about 15 minutes, Dr. Stuart called saying he had found the missing cow.

In a few moments he appeared leading the cow and following closely at her side was a tiny red calf with a white star on its forehead.

"She broke the rope last night and got away. And now what are we going to do with this pesky calf? It can't walk that far. I s'pose we will have to put it in the wagon with the children," said the doctor.

"Oh, won't that be fun?" cried Eva. "We can play with it can't we Dick? Can I have it for mine, papa, can I please?"

"Well I reckon you can, and you can be thinking of a name for it, that will give you something to do, won't it?"

The delayed breakfast preparations were resumed and in a short time the travelers were ready to start again. They ate their dinner under the shade of an oak tree and at four o'clock in the afternoon the welcome sight of Hook's Point appeared.

A barking dog heralded their arrival and people hurried out of stores and houses to see the little caravan, which they had been expecting. Isaac saw them coming and called to Mandy who came out of the house carrying little Finch in her arms, Elizabeth and Will following excitedly. They met the newcomers on the bridge that spanned the first ravine and the sisters clasped each other in a fond embrace for it had been many years since they had been together in the old home in Indiana. Isaac welcomed one and all; the children suddenly shy in the presence of strangers, made timid responses. When the greetings were over the colorful procession of people, wagon, oxen, cows and calves proceeded up the hill and turned into the yard. The oxen and cattle were watered at the creek and turned out in the pasture.

Eva insisted on giving her calf another final loving pat before it was taken away to the pasture.

"That's my calf," she said proudly. "I'm going to call her Star because that little white spot on her forehead looks just like a star, doesn't it?"

"Indeed it does," assured Isaac and she beamed with pleasure.

"It's a good thing you are running a hotel, Mandy," said Mary. "A family like this coming in on you is surely a big bother."

"I'm used to having a lot of people around so it doesn't bother me at all. Business has been a little slow lately so we have plenty of room. We've been mighty hard up though this last year, everything drowned out last summer and the store business hasn't amounted to much but I think we will do pretty well this year. I surely am glad you decided to move out here too. Martha and Emma have been so anxious for you to come so they could see your family."

"There are quite a few of us, I'm sure. Our children should have good times together."

"The more the merrier, is what we always say," Isaac said, "and we have been wanting a good doctor here for a long time. It's just too far to go to Ridgeport after Dr. Lewis. He's a fine doctor, as far as that goes, but a person could die before anyone could get him here even when riding a fast horse. But let's all go inside and have some chairs, we

can unload the wagon tomorrow."

Mandy and her girls prepared supper, and the weary travelers, able to relax now that their journey was over, gathered around the table and enjoyed the meal of salt pork, new potatoes, cornbread and gooseberry sauce more than any other for a long time.

When the dishes were cleared away and the small children put to bed, the six young ladies went outside to sit on the soft grass in the yard and to get better acquainted. Sarah and Angie resembled each other with their fair complexions and light brown hair, their gentle pleasant ways so much like their mothers. Mary Jane and Hannah were like sisters, dark hair and stormy blue-black eyes suggesting the intensity of their feelings that changed so unexpectedly from one mood to another. Clara was a studious child, short and plump, neither blonde nor brunette but a sweet combination of both and constantly busy with her own ideas. Minnie was a quiet little girl, her rather frail appearance enhanced by the nearly white hair that hung in limp curls about her thin cheeks. She seemed to be well and strong but lacked the more boisterous spirit of Mary Jane and the ambitious nature of Clara.

With the house quiet after the departure of the children the parents settled down to a discussion of the many things that concerned and interested them. They were typical in appearance of the pioneer. Mary and Mandy were slender and slightly stooped from the burdens of their work and raising their large families but there was every indication of the strength and endurance and contentment with their lot in life in the calm, placid expression of their faces and their ready smiles. Isaac was more than ever the sturdy settler with his strong physique and genial outlook on life that no amount of hardship or misfortune could vanquish. Dr. Stuart, slight and short of stature, with long and slightly waving black hair, had the aristocratic nose, betraying his Scotch ancestry, and a merry twinkle in his eyes that made friends with people and accounted for much of his success as a doctor.

The subject uppermost in the minds of the visitors was the problem of finding a place to live.

"Is there a house around here we could rent to live in until we buy a place and build a house?" asked the doctor.

"Say, we never have a spare house here," replied Isaac. "You'll have to stay with us and the other folks until you can make some plans. I've been wonderin' if you would like to buy my north west forty. It's on the west side of the road about 60 rods north, just beyond the cemetery. Quite a lot of rough ground on it but a small field could be made, all you want, probably, 'cause I don't suppose you figure on doin' much farming."

"Not very much, I can't work steady enough to expect to get much farm work done and if it can't be done at the right time, a man is just wasting his effort. That would be a good location too. What do you think of it, Mary?"

"I think that would be just grand, exclaimed his wife. "We would be close to the other folks too, wouldn't we? It isn't far to their places is it?"

"No, the relatives on both sides of the Hook and Everhart families

are in a straight line all along the length of Stringtown. John Ballard lives the first place north, then Will Hook, and a little farther on Wes McKinney, and Wes Hook lives down on the river bottom by the ford at Boone River. It's getting to be a fact that no one dares to say anything about the folks of Stringtown in the presence of any one of them or you sure will be talking about some of their relation."

"Well, Mary, I s'pose we might as well string along with the rest of them then, don't you? That is, if we can pay for it. How much do you want for that forty?"

"Oh, about \$2.00 per acre is about all it is worth."

"I could pay for half of it and give you a note for the rest, I'd like to keep a little money on hand because I might not make any for a while. We'll go up and look at it tomorrow and decide for sure, don't want to impose on you folks too long."

"Don't worry about that, Alan. And now, maybe you would like to go over to the barroom for a while. Might see some of the folks and get acquainted with a few of your future victims."

"You're quite right on both ideas, Ike, let's go." said Dr. with a laugh, for he enjoyed a joke even if it was on him.

"Now, tell me about father, Mandy" urged her sister after the men had left, "you didn't tell me very much in your letter except that it happened so suddenly."

"Yes, he was sick only three days. He got caught in a cold, freezing rain one day and took a bad cold at once. It must have turned into pneumonia right away because he was awfully sick before we realized it. We had Dr. Lewis from Ridgeport come up to see him but the medicine didn't seem to help at all. His heart might have been weak too, because he went to sleep one night and seemed to be resting easier, and in about an hour he had passed away. It was just the day before Thanksgiving, so you know it wasn't a very happy time for us here. Beulah went back home to her folks. She never had been very well satisfied here anyway and since there was nothing here to keep her, she packed up and left immediately."

"I certainly was sorry to hear about it, I had hoped to see him again sometime, but I guess we have to expect these things when we live so far apart," said Mary wistfully. "And Frank lives way out in South Dakota. Doesn't he get homesick?"

"No, he doesn't seem to. He and Angie have been there four years now so they are well satisfied. They have two children, Ike and Ella. Just think of that, I'm grandma already. I surely would like to see all of them, but I should not complain so long as they are all right. I have all my children yet but you lost one of your boys, didn't you?"

"Yes, we lost Johnny when he was about the size of your little Finch. It made my heart ache when I saw your little boy, he looks so much like Johnny did with his blue eyes and light, curly hair. It's been a long time, but I'll never forget it as long as I live. He had summer complaint caused by eating some green apples, I didn't know he had eaten them or could even find them. In just a few hours he was so terribly sick and there wasn't a thing his father could do to help him. He lay there so

sick and delirious, and he kept raising one little arm up trying to ask for water but he couldn't drink it when we tried to give it to him. It was terrible, just watching and waiting until he slipped away from us, and when we were ready to come here it seemed like I just couldn't leave that little grave so far away but life is stern for us many times and we have to be brave. I expect we spoil Dick just a little but I don't think it will hurt him any. The girls spoil him worse than his father and I do."

"That's the way it is here too. All the children idolize Finch but I am sure love never brought harm to any child as long as it is tempered with good sense."

Just then the girls came in and joined in the conversation which naturally turned to lighter, gayer subjects. The Stuart girls were very tired, however, and soon expressed their desire to retire so amid much nonsense and laughter the girls left the room. In a few moments the men returned.

"Wes Hook was in town tonight and he is coming down again tomorrow," Isaac said. "He will stop at the other places along the way and tell the folks we have company so I expect we will have lots of visitors then. And now I expect it's about time for all of us to go to bed. Where do we all sleep, Mandy?"

"Alan and Mary may have the bed here in the front room and we will sleep in the kitchen. Goodnight, folks, I hope you rest well."

The next morning Isaac and Dr. Stuart went to look over the land they had discussed the night before and it suited the doctor very well. He paid Isaac half the amount and gave him a note for the remainder. Early after dinner Wes and Sarah Hook, Wes and Martha McKinney, John and Emma Ballard and Will and Sarah Hook arrived with their families, some on foot and some in lumber wagons, to welcome the new family. It looked like a celebration and it was equally enjoyable for these social gatherings were the highlights of the rather quiet lives of the settlers and if their ability to entertain themselves that afternoon was an indication of future meetings there was no doubt that the young folks of Stringtown and Hook's Point would have some enjoyable times too.

The doctor told the people that he had already purchased a place and was anxious to put up a house as soon as possible.

"You're going to have a big job clearin' off a spot to build a house," remarked John Ballard. "The walnut and elm trees are sure standin' thick all along the road. One nice thing about it though, the logs will be handy for your house when you get 'em cut down."

"Tell you what you can do, Doc. You get all the logs cut down ready for the house an' we'll have a house raisin' for you an' put it up in a day," suggested Wes McKinney. "We're kind of busy right now but I reckon some of us can find a little time once in a while to help you cut the logs. What do the rest of you say to that?"

"Just what I was thinkin'," said Will Hook. "Unless we're awful lucky I imagine, we'll need your services from time to time, so it will be a good idea to help you out first. Anyhow you can't take care of sick folks if you are too busy buildin' a house."

All the other men voiced their approval of the idea so it was left that way. The doctor was immensely pleased by their generous offer and thanked them. "I'm not much of a farmer as you will all find out but I can count out pills, pull a tooth if I have to, and swing an axe, so I'll have the logs ready before very long," he told them.

News of the arrival of the Stuarts soon spread over the entire community and people came from miles around to meet the doctor and his family, and extend to them the warm hospitality of the new country. A great load was lifted from their minds now that they knew a doctor was within a few rods or miles from their homes. The helplessness of their situation in the face of illness and disease was one of the major headings of their pioneer life and most disheartening. The people welcomed Dr. Stuart and his family with warm, sincere friendliness and his kindly, sympathetic manner won for him an instant affection and respect.

The Stuart's visited among the relatives for a few weeks while the doctor worked, cutting the trees and clearing the land for the building. Dan helped several days and his strong arms on the other end of the cross-cut saw opposite the Doctor made short work of the big trees. Young John McKinney and George Ballard each hauled a load of the largest logs to the sawmill where they were sawed into boards for the floor.

By the first of September the logs were ready and on a warm, pleasant day the men of the neighborhood gathered and started building the house. Other people had heard of the plan so many men from the surrounding country came and helped lift the heavy logs into place while others mixed the "daubin", a mixture of dirt and water, and filled in the chinks between the logs. Unlike most of the other houses this one was not made of hewn logs, but of small round poles, long and straight.

The house was also larger than most, being 12 feet wide and 35 feet long, standing east and west near the road just north of the cemetery. The men built a fireplace in each end for one would never have been adequate to heat so much space. At noon the women living nearest the scene of action came bringing dinner for the hungry workers. They never missed an opportunity to have a good time, however, hard they might be working. Rocks had been hauled from the river and the children gladly carried them from the pile to help build the fireplace and chimney.

By nightfall the main structure was finished and the men planned to come back the next day to shingle the roof, lay the floor and put in the windows and doors. There were eight windows in the house, two in each end on either side of the fireplace and two on each side. Boards were laid on the strong cross beams of the ceiling to make a floor in the attic, to provide a room for the four older girls. Dick had a bunk along the wall and Eva slept in a little trundle bed which, during the day, was pushed under her parents bed so it would take up less space. There was a door on the south near the west end which was used for the kitchen.

The other furnishings were very modest like those in other log cabins. Dr. Stuart had brought along his small walnut desk in which he kept his supply of medicine and his books. Shelves along the north wall near the west end served as a cupboard with a curtain hung in front of them to protect the dishes and food from dust. The iron cooking utensils hung on hooks by the fireplace or rested on the floor beside it. A long table and two long seats along the side with rough chairs at each end completed the kitchen furniture.

A low rocking chair in which Mary had rocked all her children, a small table, and two large bureaus to hold the clothing were the only other furnishings in the room. The girls beds were low and had straw ticks for mattresses. A small table on which they set their candle at night, a small bureau and two chairs were the only furnishings in their room. Instead of the ladder as most houses had, this one had a stairway made of two long poles with small, narrow boards nailed securely to them for steps, which was much easier to go up and down than the old ladder.

The Stuart family thought they had a very fine house and enjoyed having their own home again. When school started the first of October in the little log house again, Clara, Minnie and Dick attended with the other children. Dr. Stuart continued to cut down the trees that grew around the house to get a place cleared off for a garden spot and small field the next year, at the same time piling up a nice supply of firewood for the winter. John Ballard helped him dig a well like the one on his place and they walled up the sides with rocks. The pails of water were raised by turning a crank on a spindle.

There was just one thing the doctor needed very much and that was a good horse. As yet he had had no calls but the approach of winter meant that he would surely be called out for colds, pneumonia, or some disease. Isaac asked all of his customers about horses and one day a farmer brought a fine young black mare to town which he said he would sell because he needed the money so badly. He asked \$50.00 for the horse and when the doctor saw it his idea of buying a cheaper horse faded completely. He loved a good horse and this one was a beauty. Proud, yet gentle, obedient to every command, he knew she would be the faithful horse he would need when the snow was deep and the sloughs nearly impassable; and the satiny smoothness of her coat was a delight to his man's love of a good horse.

Winter came with a great flurry of snowflakes and cold winds but they did not penetrate through the warm log walls of the new home. Mrs. Stuart kept very busy with the cooking and other housework even with the willing assistance of Angie and Mary Jane; she sewed by hand, making all the clothes for the family. During the long winter evenings she knitted stockings, mittens and mufflers to keep them warm through the cold weather.

Eva liked the evenings best of all because then Clara took the little girl on her lap and read to her and taught her little verses and rhymes which Eva learned quickly and enjoyed reciting to her mother the next day. All the family loved to read and spent many hours with the doctor's fine collection of books and Dick often brought a book home from school to study. Other times he spent hours whittling and carving out boats and animals with his pearl-handed jackknife, his prize possession. The older girls worked at braiding rugs and sewing quilt blocks, for every young lady was expected to prepare these things in advance for her own home.

Dr. Stuart carried in the firewood, then carried out the ashes and dumped them into a barrel from which lye would be made the next spring to be used in soap-making. As the days went by he received more calls to minister to the sick folks in the country, some of them many miles away, but however cold the weather or far away the patient, he answered the call at once. When the weather was stormiest or coldest, and the snow lay in deep drifts on the prairie and knee deep in the timber the calls came most frequently because then people's resistance was at its lowest ebb and colds and children's diseases took a firm hold while the stork preferred this season also to make its numerous visits among the homes.

When someone knocked on the door and urged the doctor to hurry, he quickly put on his heavy fur coat, cap and mittens, a scarlet muffler, and warm overshoes over sheeplined moccasins. Then he hurried out to the stable where he kept his horse ready for such emergencies, threw the light saddle on faithful Queen, bridled her and was ready. Mary always handed him the saddle bags from the door, he threw them across the horse's neck, and answering his wife's cheery farewell, started out at a fast trot toward his destination.

Many times he did not return until long after dark, chilled and fatigued from his work. He had so little to work with. His only instruments were lances, knives and a turnkey for pulling teeth. His supply of medicine was limited also, consisting of Dover's Powders, Ipecac, Callomel and Julep. Morphine and opium were used as anaesthetics and small amounts of the medicine were kept in bottles and potions of others were measured out and folded in small papers to be ready for any emergency. He had few material aids to help him but his sympathetic, friendly disposition, his cheerful attitude, and his determination to pull his patient through, inspired in his patients a strong faith in his ability that often helped as much as his medicine to speed their recovery.

When he returned, Mary always took the saddle bags and hung them on the strong peg. They were old and worn and the leather strap was growing thin for the doctor had used them since the first years of his practice before his marriage. They were always interesting and fascinating to the children. How their fingers did yearn to handle all the bottles and pretty pills and what fun it would have been to unfold all the little papers, but this was a privilege they were never allowed to enjoy. The doctor warned them never to touch them and one command was all his children ever needed. He was always strict but never unreasonable and never gave them thoughtless commands so they respected the orders knowing there was a good reason back of them.

His initials A.H.S. were printed on the saddle bags in gold letters and when Mary Jane was a little girl she would lie on the floor and kick up her heels while she repeated the letters over and over to herself, thus learning her first letters of the alphabet.

Mary kept the fire burning brightly in the fireplace while she waited for the doctor to return, sleeping soundly yet the first sound of his steps outside the door, awakened her instantly. While he removed his outer garments she set the coffeepot among the coals and when the coffee was ready she sat at the small table before the fireplace with him while he related his experiences, the hot drink and the close companionship warming his body and spirit.

Sometimes he would be well satisfied over a fine job of setting a bone or happy over the safe arrival of a new baby, but other times he would be worried and troubled because some ailment stubbornly refused to respond to his most earnest efforts. At such times he appreciated most keenly this thoughtful custom of Mary's. At times, he would remonstrate with her, "Why do you do this every time I am up late? Isn't it enough that I must worry and struggle through these weary hours without you sacrificing your rest and disturbing your thoughts?"

"Because you are doing it for me and for the children. If you can be out in this weather for hours surely I can spare a few minutes out of the night here at home where it is comfortable. I can understand how much it would mean to me if I were in your place, it is such a little

thing for me to do, and the only thing I can do to help share your burden. It does help, doesn't it, Alan?"

"If you only knew, Mary, how much it does mean to know that some one understands and when Queen and I are struggling through the snow drifts I seem to feel your presence and the night is less dark and lonely."

Mrs. Stuart was of a studious nature like her husband. She had been educated by private tutors when a child, and read extensively. She was deeply religious and her Bible was her favorite book. The doctor did not share her beliefs but never interfered with them or in the manner in which she instructed her children in their religious education. He was well versed on the contents of the Bible for he had read it several times but he had a peculiar religion of his own. He did not agree with others that there was a Hell for sinners. So far as the hereafter was concerned, he thought there might be one but no one need have any fear of it because every one had his Hell on this earth if he deserved it.

"Live according to the teachings of Jesus and you need have no fear of the hereafter," he always declared. "If you sin on this earth you will suffer on this earth for your misdeeds. A guilty conscience needs no accuser and the pangs of remorse are the sharpest pains and the most severe punishment anyone can have."

He loved nothing more than a spirited argument with a preacher or anyone who tried to refute his assertions. Neither side ever came to any conclusions or convinced the other but they had a good time trying for it was always done sensibly and good naturedly.

The doctor was intensely interested in world affairs and read every paper he could procure. And many times he read over again the works of Lord Byron, Burns, Shakespeare and Pilgrims Progress, his favorites. Clara was as interested in reading as her father and was looking forward to the time when she could teach school. But, Eva, more than any of the others seemed to share her father's love of poetry and aesthetic appreciation.

There were no idle moments through the winter but when spring came the family found the days all too short to accomplish all the things that needed to be done. As April brought warm sunshine and took the chill out of the ground Dr. Stuart hitched the oxen to the wooden plow and broke up a small patch of ground for the garden near the house. Farther north of the house where there was a stretch of level ground with no trees on it he turned under a ten acre patch of sod for corn. Mary worked out of doors all forenoon every day, planting her garden seeds, setting her few hens and helping the doctor plant his corn. It was hard work but she loved to do it and the girls managed the housework very well. She paused often as she worked, to look at the blue sky through the trees, to listen to the song of the bird perched on a fence rail to watch her.

The doctor had never milked a cow in his life so Mary did the milking night and morning while he brushed the flies away with a branch of hazelbrush. It was a comical arrangement but it had its advantages. The small houses and large families of those days gave parents little time to be alone and talk over their affairs and problems, especially when they worked hard and evenings were short, so many a confidential chat was en-

joyed by the doctor and his wife as she milked the cows and he shooed the flies.

It was necessary for the family to raise as much of their food as possible because money was as scarce with them as the other people. The doctor did not charge large fees for his services but even so many of the people were so hard up that they could not pay their bills right away and not always in cash when they did. Some of them would bring him a sack of flour, a ham or chunk of beef, anything they could spare and the money came in installments, whenever the people sold something. All of it helped but it could not be depended on and many a time Mary would take one of her hens under her arm and go down to the store where she would trade it for sugar, flour or whatever she needed.

Sometimes the doctor wondered why he continued his profession when there was so little in it but as he looked about him he saw that he was about as well off as his neighbors. They had as much as anyone else and there was some satisfaction in doing the work he loved and as times improved he would certainly be better off financially too. Mary scoffed at his ideas when he felt discouraged.

"Sometimes, Alan, I think you are a little mercenary," she would say "money isn't everything you know, we're getting along all right, we are happy and contented, what more do we want?"

"Well, I just feel that I might not be doing all I should for you and the children."

"We're satisfied with you just as you are and I wouldn't have you doing anything else if you could; you know you're a doctor and nothing else. And when you think about it," she would say with a merry laugh, "isn't it nice we don't have to owe any doctor bills?"

Chapter Five

A Pioneer Doctor

Never before had the settlers harvested so bountiful a crop of wheat and oats as they did in this year of 1860. In every field the heavy heads of grain nodded in the breeze, their weight threatening to break the tall stems.

The farmers went into the fields eagerly with their scythes and cut the grain then bound it into sheaves to be threshed. When it was placed in sacks and stored away they felt rich and blessed. There would be no long winter stretching ahead of them this year with an empty flour barrel to haunt their dreams. The green corn was growing tall and shooting ears so there was every assurance of plenty of feed for the stock.

One and all believed that at last they were going to have an easier time and that they could go ahead with some of their long delayed plans. The most earnest desire of every parent was to build a schoolhouse so after a thorough discussion of the project they decided to build one immediately in order that the children might be able to use it that fall. The men cut logs and hauled them to the sawmill and when the boards were ready, hauled them to the specified location a few rods south and east of Isaac's house. Then all the men whose children would go to that school, or were interested, worked together and built it.

The schoolhouse was 16 feet wide and 20 feet long when completed, faced the south and boasted four large windows, and a blackboard extended across the front of the room. There were real desks that would hold the pupils' books and slates and the seats had backs on them. The children looked at their new school house with awe, pride and pleasure; it would be fun to go to school here where the board floor looked so clean. It was a great improvement over the log house with its dirt floor and oiled paper windows. Miss Ann Richey was engaged to teach the school when it started in October.

Prayer meetings were the chief social occasions in the community and the young people attended every one with their parents because when the meeting was over they could play games and entertain themselves as they wished. The young people of Hook's Point and Stringtown together with others in the country made a large group. Young people did their courting only under the most strict parental supervision and this was, therefore, the finest possible opportunity for this pleasant diversion.

Dan Pointer had been a frequent visitor at the Stuart home during the summer. The doctor hired him at various times to help with his work and often Dan would come up ostensibly to chat with the doctor on various topics, to argue or to borrow a book. But even a stranger could have noticed that Mary Jane was the object of his interest. Her thick, black hair, done up in heavy braids around her head, coronet fashion, her rosy cheeks and stormy blue eyes were attractive to many a young man in the neighborhood but she favored none and refused to admit even to herself that Dan was particularly interesting to her.

"Humpf!" She would say with a shrug of her shoulders when her sisters teased her. "Lots of time to get married. I'm only 19 and I've decided to teach school next year. I'm going a while this year and finish up some

of the books I didn't like before and didn't learn well enough to teach the subjects. When I get married I want to have some money to buy some of the things I'd like to have in my home--that is, if I ever decide I want one. And I know just what kind of a wedding dress I would like too, and it would cost a lot of money, a dark blue or more like sky blue I think, of heavy silk, made with puffed sleeves and a full skirt and trimmed with rows and rows of white lace and--."

"Well," interrupted Clara onetime when she was talking like this, "For a person who isn't planning to be married soon or maybe never you surely have done a great deal of useless planning."

"Oooh, that dress would cost a fortune and be a terrible job to make," exclaimed Angie, "and you'd need at least three petticoats. Goodness, it sure will be an awful job getting you married off. I don't care for anything so fussy myself. I just want a plain dress, something sensible I can wear afterwards. Lem says he thinks pink would look nice with my brown hair and fair skin."

"Angie!" cried Mary Jane in consternation. "Are you and Lem McIntosh thinking of getting married? Why, you've only known him three months, since he's been working out there on that farm."

"I know it doesn't seem long but I'm 20 and he's 24 and we are sure of our love for each other. He's going to ask the folks next Sunday and if they will give their consent, we'll be married soon and he'll go on working this summer. He thought I might be able to work for my board at the same place and by next spring we can get a place of our own."

"Oh, Angie, I'll be so lonesome without you but I suppose it won't be so bad if you live close and I can see you often."

"Of course it won't and you surely don't want me to be an old maid do you?"

"No, dearie I don't. Only I sure will miss you."

Lem came the next Sunday afternoon, walking the two miles from the farm where he worked. In the strange way secrets have, of leaking out, all the Stuart family seemed to know that this was an important day so one by one Dick and the girls drifted out of doors leaving Angie, her parents, and Lem in the house. Lem was big and tall and awkward, a slow easy going kind of person but when he felt the opportune moment had arrived to present his question there was no hesitation in his speech, directly and manfully he asked the doctor for his consent to marry Angie.

There followed then a discussion of his future plans which met with the doctor's approval and the father and mother gave their consent with blessings and best wishes. Lem beamed with pleasure and Angie looked very happy. This custom of the young man asking a father for his daughter's hand in marriage was really nothing more than a polite courtesy and was seldom refused, unless the young man realized his unworthiness and therefore knew what to expect. Nevertheless, it did take courage to ask this favor while the old folks waited solemnly for the earnest young man to finish, the longer he talked and the more convincing he tried to be the less certain he felt of his chances.

The wedding day was set for the first day of September which fell on Sunday. It was a beautiful warm day and the marriage was performed out in the front yard under the shade of the large oak tree that shaded the yard and the well. The vines that covered the side of the well and grew up on a frame Dick had made, served as a background for the bridal party.

Dan and Mary Jane were best man and bridesmaid and Eva carried the ring, a plain gold band, on a small cushion. Angie was a fair and lovely bride in her pink dress and Lem was bursting with pride in her and looking very nice himself in his black broadcloth suit.

When the wedding was over they were congratulated and the bride was kissed by all the aunts and cousins and Dan, who declared an almost brother ought to have some privileges. Mary and the other girls served lunch to all the guests, the inhabitants of Stringtown, the Ballards, McKinneys, Hooks, Isaac's family and Caroline Hanley, a close friend of the girls, from the country. When all the guests had gone home Dr. Stuart hitched Queen to a buggy he had borrowed from John Ballard and took the newlyweds to the farm where they would live and work that fall and winter.

Eva and Finch had become fast friends and spent their most delightful hours playing together. Their mothers often walked the short distance between their homes and the children played busily and congenially while the mothers visited. They preferred each other to their own brothers and sisters for they were unusually congenial in their childish ways. Their favorite playground at Finch's home was down in the creek that flowed through the ravine, clear and warm, a narrow, shallow stream. Mud pies lined the shore and they washed their hands in the clean water. Sometimes they sailed little wooden boats which Dick made with his jackknife for them and when they got hungry they went to the house and begged for doughnuts or bread and butter or anything Finch had seen his mother making.

At Eva's home they took turns swinging on a strong grapevine Dick had discovered in the timber back of the house. The tree stood on a side hill and Dick and the older girls swung far out thrilling to the danger as they looked down to the bottom of the hill as they swung out. Eva and Finch were not so brave, so swung out carefully almost afraid then to look down and see how far their feet were from the ground. When they tired of this they picked flowers and traded them to Eva's mother for something to eat, for treating each other was the most enjoyable part of the visit and the mothers knew what to expect.

Rarely did either of them have any difficulties but one day Finch had a very unhappy experience. Mary and Emma Ballard, with Finch, had walked down to Mandy's to spend the afternoon. Eva was dressed in a new blue and white calico dress piped in red calico and she strutted around so importantly that Finch decided she was getting entirely too much attention especially when he had a new dress to show too.

"Me got new dress, too" he declared "Me show you."

He insisted that his mother should get it and show it to the company so she did, explaining that Lawyer Berkeley, who had helped name him, had been in town the day before and had brought him the dress. Berkeley took a special interest in the child and always brought him something each time he came. Finch was very proud of the dress, a brown

chambray, made in the popular style for three year old boys, with the skirt sewed to a yoke, two box plaits in front and back and worn with a belt. Eva and the ladies admired it to his great satisfaction and then another idea popped into his head. Why couldn't he wear his dress as well as Eva? His mother explained that he must keep it to wear when he went visiting as Eva did.

Finch wasn't satisfied, so he kept teasing to put it on. His mother explained and coaxed him to go out and play and forget it but he became more stubborn. Finally she lost her patience and took him into the bedroom where she gave him a dressing but not with the Berkeley dress. It was a sad afternoon for a disappointed little boy and he took no more chances on having a similar experience. He had learned an important lesson.

Dr. Stuart did not have an office so when a patient came to him he had to diagnose their case or administer to their needs in his home. There was only one kind of patient that he dreaded to see come in and that was one with a tooth to be pulled. He would pull teeth but he never liked the job.

One day a grizzled and frightened old man who lived north across the river came riding his bony old horse up to the house and asked Dr. Stuart if he could do something for him. His face was swollen pitifully and the poor fellow was torn between fear of the ordeal ahead of him and a desire to put an end to his suffering. He sat down in the chair the doctor indicated and opened his mouth.

"D'ya think ya can pull it, Doc, or d'ya think maybe ya can do something else fer it?" he asked. "I kinda hate to lose it 'cause its the only one I got left on that side where I chew my tobaccy and grub. But if ya think it oughta come out, I reckon ya better give it a yank. I can't stand this no longer, nohow."

"Well, I think we ought to pull it out. There isn't much left of it and it will likely keep on aching and giving you trouble until it is pulled so just hang on tight to the chair and it'll soon be over."

The doctor adjusted his turnkey, gave it a quick turn and out came the tooth. The man jumped out of the chair and danced around like a crazy man, moaning and groaning in his misery. The doctor stood by, feeling very sorry for him yet hardly able to suppress a smile at the poor fellow's comical antics. Gradually the pain lessened and the patient began to feel better. Hearing a step on the board walk, the Doctor turned and saw his wife peeking in at the door.

"Is it all over?" she asked shakily.

"It's out, all over and we're both glad aren't we, pappy?" asked the doctor with a smile. "My wife never can stand to be around when I am pulling a tooth so she always goes out of doors 'till it's all over."

"Indeed, I do" said Mary. "I can stand most anything but pulling a tooth and I can't do any good watching anyway so I get out. Here, won't you sit down and have a sup of coffee and some of this fresh bread and butter? I don't suppose you have felt like eating much while you had such a toothache."

"I sure ain't ma'am. My jaw is feelin' better right along and a cup of coffee would taste mighty good. Thank ya a heap."

When he was ready to leave he asked, "And what do I owe ya, Doc?"

"Oh, about a quarter ought to be enough for that job."

"Cheap enough and much obliged to ya, Doc."

School began the first week of October in the new school house with Miss Ann Richey teaching. When she rang the school bell that first morning the boys and girls filed into the room from the yard to take the seats they had come early to select. The double seats were chosen by close friends who insisted on sitting together. There was great excitement among the pupils, the new books, the new building and the smooth blackboard were wonderful. When the teacher called the number classes up and gave them work to do on the blackboard their eyes glowed with pleasure and little fingers tried very hard to make neat numbers on the dark surface.

It took several days for the teacher to get the classes arranged. There were pupils ranging in age from six to 19 years and their ability did not correspond with their ages, many times. Some had attended school so little and others had had better advantages but finally Ann got them all organized and classified and the children learned rapidly considering the number of pupils and grades under the teacher's supervision. Will and Elizabeth Hook, Isaac's children, were six and eight years old. Dick, Minnie, Clara and Mary Jane Stuart accompanied by Will Hook's children, Elizabeth, Viola and Lon walked the moderate distance to school. Others came from other directions many of them walking two or three miles. Eva and Finch remained at home, lonely with all the other children gone, and wished they could go too.

Mothers packed the lunches in pails, finding great pleasure in the task, and started the children out each morning with a joyous farewell. The girls were neatly dressed in dark gingham homemade dresses and wore light figured pinafores to keep their dresses clean. Their braids were tied with bright hair ribbons and their cheeks glowed with health and joy. The boys were blue denim overalls and blue chambray shirts, made by their mothers or sisters.

Mary Jane Stuart finished her school work, took her examinations, and taught a term of school at the McKinney schoolhouse farther north. The winter passed uneventfully but as spring approached an uneasy feeling crept into the minds of the settlers.

The peaceful little town of Hook's Point had enjoyed its slow but gradual progress and was deeply absorbed in its affairs of making a living and finding pleasure in everyday activities. It was far enough away from the main centers of the nation to give its citizens a partial feeling of isolation. They were interested in the business and welfare of their country but it seemed too far away to affect them greatly. News did not travel very fast and their information came long after government issues and deals were completed so they naturally felt that they had little to do with the actual planning or responsibility of it.

However, the newspapers that came at regular intervals, the letters from relatives and friends from different parts of the country, kept them conscious of the fact that they were a very important part of their country although they were so far from the nation's headquarters. Vague rumors of the growing dissension between the north and the south had been filtering in, causing the people to pause and reflect on the disaster that

might befall them if the feelings should reach a feverish height of intensity. The Freeman ran long accounts of the activities and arguments of the two opposing factions and the people became more concerned.

They gathered at quilting parties and prayer meetings, in the stores and barroom and discussed it at great length. Will Hook, big and broad-shouldered with fiery eyes and a positive manner, would take his pipe out of his mouth and wave it in the air emphatically as he talked.

"It's nothing but foolishness. What does a whole country want to get so het up about a negro for? What difference does it make to him if he's free or not? Turn him loose to shift for himself and he'd starve to death likely. If they want to be free, let 'em fight for their freedom themselves. What do we want to get a lot of our boys killed off for, just to make it easier for a nigger? Reckon all the rest of us has to work most as hard as the blacks do."

"That's one way of looking at it, Wes," said Dr. Stuart. "But there is that principle of freedom for mankind that we fought for in the seventies that is being torn down. This country does not believe in human bondage and the northern people are willing to fight to keep the country free of slavery or caste system. The preamble to the constitution declares that all men are born free and equal. Slavery disputes the very foundation of our government and citizenship. If this idea of slavery is allowed to continue the poor whites may sometime, find themselves in the position of serfs, also."

"Are you in favor of war, Doc?" John Ballard wanted to know. "Do you think it's right to send our boys out to fight when we need them so badly at home? This country is still pretty new and raw and needs a lot of work done before it can be brought up to the standards we want to see. We need our young men to help in clearing the land and building homes. We don't want to send them out to destroy the results that have been accomplished at such great cost."

"You're right John", Dr. Stuart replied. "That has always been the trouble with war, there are so many good reasons why war should never come to tear asunder our hopes, our plans and our progress. But a country cannot survive on hate, on conflicting opinions and opposing standards. We must stand together and fight together. The breach between the north and south will widen until we will be as two countries. Either we must submit to the standards of the south or it must submit to us."

"Yeah, but why must we be bothered with it?" insisted Wes. "We're way out here hundreds of miles from the states that are so riled up about it. It don't make any differences to us who wins or whether the southerners have to give up their slaves and go to work. We got our hands full out here."

"It does concern us though," Dr. Stuart continued gravely, "we are a part of the United States and its destiny is our destiny, its troubles our troubles and its happiness our happiness. Above all, we are citizens and as citizens we have our duty."

The discussions went on and on, gaining nothing, solving nothing, and slowly the people realized how helpless they were in the web of circumstances that bound them together. The newspapers were thoughtfully read and every new incident and development duly considered.

The women, mothers especially, talked over the situation sorrowfully when they were together, or paused in their knitting and churning, carried

away from the duties at hand by their absorption in the nightmare of dread that colored their waking hours and shattered their peaceful dreams at night.

The young people tried to be gay and carefree with the buoyant faith of youth but they also had their moments of despair. Mary Jane lost much of her air of unconcern and became most sweet and amiable. Dan was overjoyed at the change in her.

"You know," Mary Jane, he told her teasingly one Sunday afternoon "a person could almost believe you might be just a little worried about this war question. You really wouldn't miss me any if I went, would you?"

"Oh, I s'pose I would some," she replied archly. "After all, you've been camping rather steadily on the doorstep for nearly two years so I imagine I would miss you almost as much as the doorstep."

"I thought you would say something like that, just to throw me off the track but I understand you pretty well and I know you don't mean it. Anyhow I don't get discouraged or give up easily. You've taught school as you wanted to and you once said you like housework better. Well, I've got enough money saved up to make a good down payment on an 80-acre piece of land I've had my mind set on for some time.

Now, you know, I haven't kept coming all this time unless I cared for you and you wouldn't have let me come if you had disliked me too much. There happens to be a couple of other young fellows around here who would like to come here too but I reckon they knew it wasn't any use. In fact, I let 'em know in an off-hand way that they'd be trespassing a little if they did and I reckon I could lick most any of 'em if I had to."

"Why, Dan, you impossible person," exclaimed Mary Jane. "You sure do take a lot for granted. I never heard of such outrageous actions."

"All's fair in love and war," he answered gaily. They had come to an old fallen tree trunk along the path in the woods back of the Stuart house, where they had often talked before. Mary Jane sat down and Dan sat beside her. Taking her hands in his he said softly, "Listen, Mary Jane, we've been stalling long enough. You know I love you dearly and nothing would make me happier than to hear you say you love me too." His face was full of earnest love and pleading. Putting his arm around her waist he pulled her close to him, and putting his other hand under her chin, turned her fair young face up to his and looked deep into her eyes.

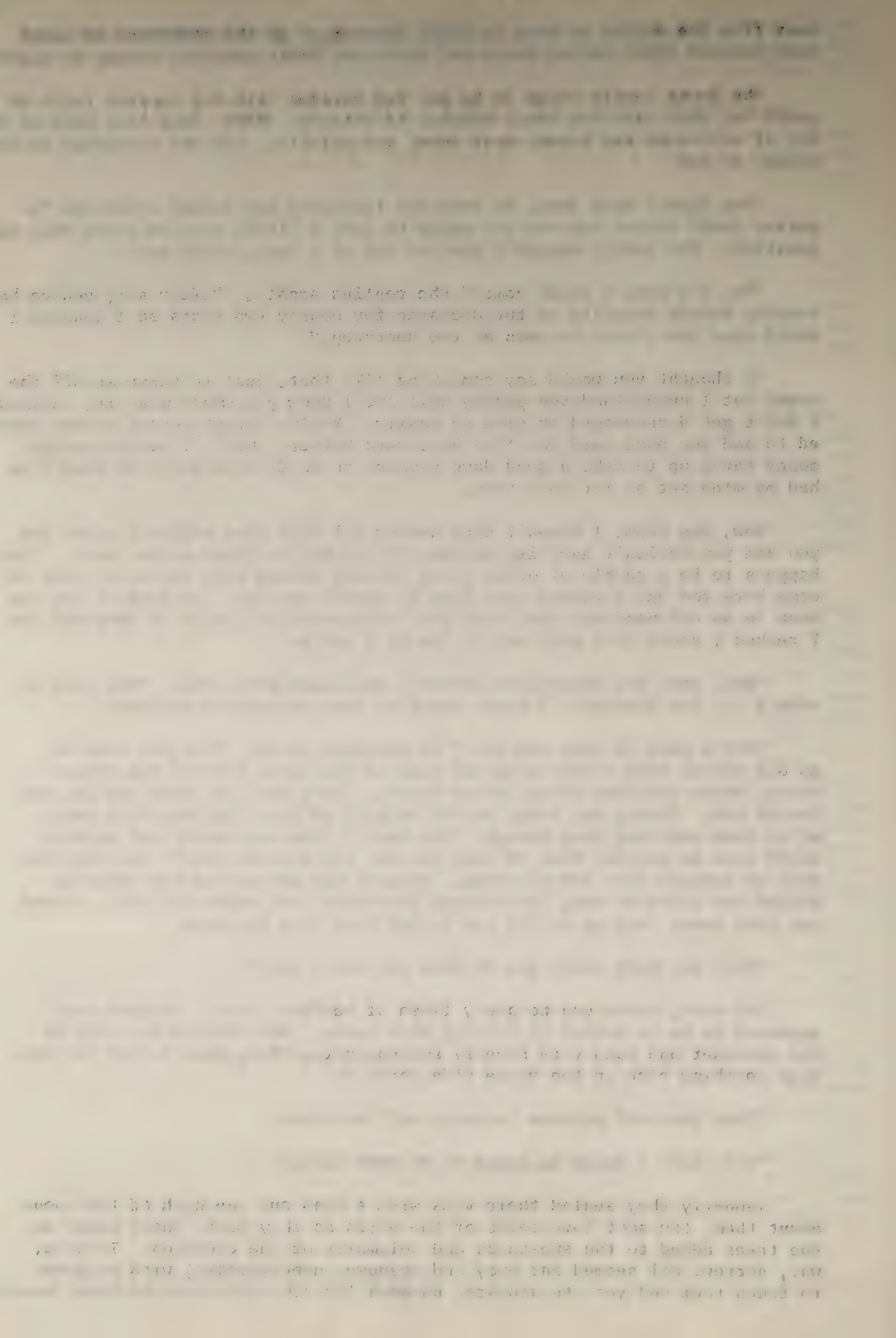
"Tell me, Mary Jane, you do love me, don't you?"

For once, there was no saucy flash of her blue eyes. Instead they appeared to be in danger of filling with tears. She dropped her head to his shoulder and said very sweetly and honestly, "Yes, Dan, I love you more than anything else in the whole wide world."

"Then you will promise to marry me?" he asked.

"Yes, Dan, I would be proud to be your wife."

Tenderly they sealed their vows with a kiss and the hush of the woods about them, the soft love calls of the birds as they built their nests in the trees added to the sweetness and solemnity of the occasion. Trouble, war, sorrow, all seemed far away and shadowy, unbelievable, with no power to touch them and yet its sinister shadows lay aching close to their hearts.



And now when their own little world was apparently rosy and full of promise it was contrarily closer than ever to disaster.

Mary Jane was the first one to disturb the happy spell with the forebodings that were uppermost in their minds.

"Dan, do you really think you'll have to go to war? It can't reach us way out here, can it? Surely there will be enough soldiers farther east so no one from here will be called."

"I don't know, dear, but it looks black. President Lincoln has sent out an order that all eligible men must register at once. I suppose some young men will be excused because they are needed at home or have families, but I'm quite footloose so there's nothing to prevent my going."

"Oh, that crazy old war!" Mary Jane, cried vehemently. "Why can't people live peaceably as they want to? War! War! Can't people ever learn there is no sense in war? Why don't the southerners turn the slaves free without war? If they lose the war, they will have to lose them anyway, and they will lose, won't they?"

"Beyond a doubt."

"Then just think of all the sorrow and misery they could avert if they would do the sensible thing."

"I believe as you do but those southern people are a proud, idealistic class of people. They have lived easy, aristocratic lives and think menial labor is beneath their dignity. They are ladies and gentlemen and nobility does not soil its hands with common labor. For many years they have enjoyed the dignity and superiority of the whites over the negroes. Freeing the slaves would automatically put them in the same class and that would be very distasteful to the white people. They probably realize that in the event of a defeat it would be better to free the slaves now, but their reasoning is overpowered by their desire to keep their exalted station in life. We have never felt the difference as they have because we have not been brought up with their ideals. We have the Yankee feeling of comradeship with everyone. However, this feeling between the states has become so strong that something must be done about it. Only one set of feelings can be possible within a nation. One side must be subdued and war seems to be the only answer this time, as usual."

"What fools people are." Mary Jane declared. "I suppose too, there is the financial situation to be considered. If the slaves are freed those people will lose a lot of money."

"Indeed they will and they will also have to pay more for their help than they have been paying the negroes. They only get their living."

"The worst thing about slavery to me," continued Mary Jane, "is the utter disregard for family life. Selling the fathers and children, breaking up the homes and scattering the family all over. It isn't human."

"It certainly isn't and that is one of the things that has made slavery so repulsive to the north. They think a social reformation is imperative. Our country will be a better place when slavery is abolished and they are determined to do something about it."

"Well, I hope they win. It will be awful to go through a war and accomplish nothing. But what about us? If you should have to go away, what can we plan on?"

"It doesn't look very encouraging, I'll admit. I suppose we will just have to wait a while and see how things turn out. If I must go it would be better to wait until I return to get married, don't you think?"

"Yes, I'm sure that would be best and maybe it isn't as bad as it looks and will all blow over in a short time."

"I hope so," declared Dan. "Well the sun is going down, I suppose we had better start back to the house or your folks will think we have eloped already or got lost. D'ya think your folks will enjoy the thought of having me for a son-in-law?"

"The way they are always bragging on you, they'd better like the idea. I don't think they will object except to tease us."

Summer passed with the settlers following their usual routine of caring for their crops, clearing more land, building rail fences around their property but it was work directed more from habit than from interest. The ominous war clouds hovered more closely around the firesides and grocery counters of Hook's Point. Some of the boys in the nearby communities had been called to the colors and the inevitable day came when the arrow of fate must point to the little hamlet waiting apprehensively to hear its verdict.

The first man called was Cash Corey, who made his home with Wes and Martha McKinney since he was 12 years old. He and John McKinney were like brothers and Wes and Martha regarded them as equals. Cash was a fair young man, 22 years old, with a sunny though impetuous disposition, a giant in strength and size. He had only a week to prepare for leaving as he was scheduled to leave on the stage coach the first Saturday in September.

All the villagers, the inhabitants of String Town and the people from the country were on hand to bid him farewell and Godspeed. Bravely smiling through their tears they shook hands with Cash and showered him with good wishes and friendly words. Then the stage driver called "All Aboard!", Cash took his seat in the coach, the driver cracked the whip and the horses started out on a fast trot. In a few moments it disappeared over the small hill to the south, sending up a thin trail of dust to mark its progress.

The people stood watching quietly until the vehicle was swallowed up in the distance then abruptly all began talking at once about everything and nothing, the way people do when trying to cover up the thoughts nearest their hearts. Finally, one by one, by twos, by family groups, the crowd dispersed, the first sacrifice of war had been met and passed, gradually they would become accustomed to the heartbreak and dismay, but like the staunch, brave patriots they were they met it unflinchingly, accepting this new burden with the same calm acquiescence as they had all the others.

A month dragged by and a call came for two more men, this time Dan and John Will Hook, son of Will and Sarah Hook. John was 21 years old, the pride of his father and it was a severe blow to Will when he realized that his son would have to go. John was engaged to be married to Caroline Henley and they had made their plans for Christmas day but as soon as the call came they decided to get married before he left.

Hook's and Henley's were a little dubious about the idea, believing it would be wiser to wait until he returned. But the young couple was determined about it.

"I'll just have to come back if we're married," he told Caroline. "With you waiting back home here for me, I'll be even more careful and somehow I believe I'll come back safely sometime."

"Of course you will John," declared Caroline. "I'll pray for you every night and I'll send a letter every week. I don't see how they will ever get the mail to all the boys but if I send a lot of letters some of them ought to reach you, hadn't they? And you'll write too, won't you? Long letters telling all about yourself and where you are. It will bring you closer to me and I won't be so lonely."

"You're a brave little lady, Carrie dear," he said, kissing her. "It helps so much when you have so much courage. I'll be the toughest Yankee in the whole army. Just one look at me and those soft spoken southerners will get so scared they can't shoot straight to save their lives and I'll dodge every one of them."

"Of course you will, John", Caroline assured him brightly, hastily brushing the tears from her cheeks where they trickled down steadily.

They were married on Wednesday before he was to leave on Saturday and the intervening days were the gayest of their lives. They seemed to feel that they must crowd enough love and laughter, joy and companionship into those hours to last through all the long, lonely days to come.

"Something to look back on, something to remember, something to come back to," John said with a wistful seriousness and a dawning realization of their situation that left them both quiet for several moments as they sat holding hands in the twilight of their last evening, his trembling voice, her tear filled eyes, the only indication of the fear, the uncertainty that engulfed them.

Dan and Mary Jane took it philosophically, they were a few years older and less impetuous.

"We could get married too, but somehow I don't think it is the wise thing to do," Dan said thoughtfully when they heard John and Caroline were getting married. "If I come back we can be married immediately and if I don't come back it will be easier for you to forget a lover than a husband. You need not fear, I will come back Mary Jane. No one knows when this war will end but when it does I'll be the first one on the first train headed west. I'll get the fastest horse and come galloping up to your door in no time at all. And you'll be waiting for me, won't you, darling?"

"I'll be waiting, Dan," she declared bravely. "I'll spend the time making things for our home and I can go on teaching school. But don't you wait too long or you'll find a cranky old school ma'am waiting and how would you like that?"

"Just fine, as long as it is you."

On the night before he left, Mary Jane went up to her room and when she returned, she gave him a package.

"Something for you to take along. I made them all by myself and I intended to give them to you for your birthday next month but I might as well give them to you now, then I'll know you have them."

When Dan unwrapped the articles he found two pairs of woolen socks and a pair of mittens.

"Mary, did you honestly make these all by yourself? Why, they're wonderful. I thought you said you couldn't knit well."

"Oh, I've tried to learn, they're not nice like the ones Mother makes but they might feel good on a cold day. Winter will soon be here and while you are headed south, you might not get there right away and you might need them if it gets bitter cold. I always think of the soldiers at Valley Forge, how they suffered from cold and exposure but I know the armies are better equipped now than they were then."

"Yes, and I may be such a bum soldier that I'll have to spend my days peeling potatoes and washing dishes, so I'll keep plenty warm, don't you think so?"

"I only wish you would get to do that, then you would be safe and comfortable all the time."

"Say, you would be proud of a kitchen fraidy-cat wouldn't you, now? Huh-uh, not for me. I'd rather operate a bayonet than a carving knife."

"Dan, how awful!" exclaimed Mary Jane. "If you will joke about such serious things, I'll tell you I'd rather have a 'live' tatter peeler than a dead corporal."

She said this so comically that Dan laughed uproariously and she smiled in spite of herself but they were soon serious again.

"Mary Jane," said Dan softly, pulling her down to sit on his lap. "I never gave you an engagement ring, because you said you didn't care especially for one and we could use the money for other things. But I have something else for you that will mean more than anything else I could give you."

He unbuttoned his left shirt pocket and drew out a small gold locket and chain. "My mother's" he said softly.

"There are two pictures in it, one of her and one of me when I was ten years old. I have carried it with me all the time since she left me alone six years ago. It has helped to keep me honest and upright. I could not do wrong while I wore her picture over my heart and I have always felt that her pride and faith in her "Danny Boy," as she always called me, was as real as if she were with me. Now, let me clasp it around your neck. Something might happen to me or it might get lost, so I want you to keep it for me. You are all I have in the world, you and the little locket. Sometime I'll come back and claim both for my own."

"I'll be so proud to keep it and wear it, and I'll wait for you, but oh, Dan, it will be such a long time, won't it?" she said and threw her arms around his neck and clung to him, sobbing brokenly, while Dan tried to console her.

All too soon the day came and a farewell party gathered again at Hook's Point to bid the boys farewell. Caroline shed many tears when it was time to say the final good-bye but Mary Jane gave Dan one of her gayest, most carefree smiles and waved gaily when he left. Not for the world would Mary Jane let her composure desert her for all to see and only Dan, his own broken heart well hidden, knew the ache of the parting.

The Thanksgiving season arrived. Snow lay deep on the prairie and the bobsleds skimmed lightly along over the snow as the horses pulled their load along, their hoof beats muffled in the soft snow and the sleigh bells ringing musically. But there was little of the light hearted gaiety always so prevalent at this holiday week. The men hunted the wild turkeys to be roasted for the dinner, the children cracked nuts and pulled taffy, and the women did all usual baking but there was an under current of dread and suspense that could not be overcome and finally everyone gave up trying.

They spent the day talking of their apprehension and fear for the future, discussed the probably welfare of the three boys, Cash, John and Dan, and found a great deal of comfort in unloading and sharing their pent-up grief. Not a word had been heard from the boys since they had left and one by one someone would say, "At Christmas time we will hear. It takes time to get mail from such a distance. Sure, we'll be hearing one of these days." And someone else would say, "Of course, we will hear soon." nodding their heads and smiling brightly.

Christmas time came nearer, the usual preparations were made, and plans and excitement were at a feverish tempo. Gifts were made secretly and surreptitiously hidden away. New sawdust dolls for the little girls, new ribbons or a dress for the older girls. For the boys, knitted socks and mittens, a new knife or mouth harp.

Eva and Finch went along with Will and Dick to cut the Christmas trees and drag them home on the sled. The trees were put up by a window facing the road in the Hook and Stuart homes. Minnie and Elizabeth popped corn and helped Finch and Eva string it and decorate the tree in first one house, then the other. Bittersweet from the timber, red and colorful was placed on the tree along with stars cut out of tinsel paper from cigars.

Again the men brought home turkeys to be roasted in the dutch oven along with Irish and sweet potatoes and carrots. Fruit cake reposed in a stone jar, heavy with raisins, plums and nuts. Raspberry and wild strawberry jam was brought from its secret storage place to add to the festive occasion. The stage coach was due to arrive the day before Christmas and no one fully realized how much the success and happiness of Christmas Day would depend on what the stage carried in the form of mail. The town was full of people, buying the last few little things they needed and to get the mail and latest news.

Isaac took the mail the driver handed to him and hurriedly looked through it for the hoped-for letters. "Here's one from Cash Corey, Wes", he shouted and Wes came forward hurriedly. He opened it with shaking hands and he and Martha tired to read it at the same time.

Isaac looked through the other letters but there were none from Dan or John. "No other letters," he said dispiritedly. "Guess the boys forgot about us", with an attempt to smile that only gave his face a more sad and melancholy expression.

"No other letters". The words passed on through the crowd until they reached the ears of Mary Jane and Caroline, waiting, hoping, yet not daring to hope too much, because of the bitter disappointment that might follow.

Tears came to Caroline's eyes but she quickly dashed them away and said brightly, "Well, I just hope they got our letters anyway, don't you, Mary Jane? Even if we didn't get theirs. After all, they're far away from home and everyone they know. Maybe Dan and John aren't even together. We're home with the folks, safe and comfortable so I guess we ought to be brave as they are."

"Yes," agreed Mary Jane, "And no news is good news, so I've heard. We'll have to believe that and not give up. Maybe the papers will give some news one of these days. Let's go over and see what Cash has to say in his letter."

Wes was reading the letter and explaining it at the same time.

"He says here, he's well and getting along fine, wishes he could be home for Christmas but the boys don't talk much about it. Some of them are homesick enough anyway. Are in training yet and are getting used to the long marches. Says he's glad he's a tough old woodcutter, makes it a lot easier for him than for some of the city dudes. Says to tell everybody, "Hello." and why don't more people write. He's only had one letter since he's been there. He says the government seems to be preparing for a long battle so 'twill probably be a long time before he sees Hook's Point again. Love to all and a Merry Christmas.

The letter seemed to add some cheer to the group of people. One letter had come through so others might also. Christmas Day and Eve passed with a good deal of merriment. A new year was just around the corner and a new year might bring great changes. With their brave pioneer philosophy, the people were determined to look on the bright side and celebrated New Years Eve with a hilarious good time. And so a new year, the eventful 12 months of 1862 was ushered in with all the faith of human nature and the unexpected vagaries of Fate.

Chapter Six

A Cabin of Broken Dreams

On a cold, gloomy Saturday afternoon in January, Mary Jane sat by a window in the warm glow of the fireplace, sewing together the colorful blocks of a log cabin quilt. She sewed swiftly, intently, her nimble fingers flying with the ease and efficiency of an expert.

"Ten more blocks to sew together and the top will be all done," she said to herself. "And then I'll surely have a letter from Dan and I'll have a quilting to celebrate."

She had been playing a little game with herself while waiting for a letter. First it had been, "I'll hear by Thanksgiving, then I'll have so much for which to be thankful". Next it was, "I'll hear at Christmas time, it will be my best present," Then, "surely I'll get a letter for New Year's Day." And lately, a bit doubtful, with a forced gaiety, "I'll hear when I get the quilt done." Sometimes she would work feverishly, trying to finish it, other times neglecting it, dreading, yet hopeful of the day and its all too likely disappointment.

The door opened and Dr. Stuart came in stamping the snow from his shoes and removing the heavy fur coat and cap that he always wore in the winter to protect him from the cold.

"Awful chilly today, Mary," he said to his wife, "wouldn't surprise me if we get some more snow. Got any hot coffee?"

"Sure, I always set the coffee pot on the coals when I see you coming, I don't see how you stand to drink so much of that warmed over coffee."

"It isn't so bad and it warms me up so good." He poured a cup of the steaming liquid and sat down in the rocking chair to enjoy it. He tasted it then made a wry face saying, "Mary, how many times has this been warmed up it does taste a little overdone this time, in fact it tastes like a -- like a wet dog."

Mary usually took his remarks lightly, but he said this with such an impertinent manner that she lost her patience for once and said, "Humph! did you ever taste a wet dog?"

However her remark was lost on the doctor for he seemed to be thinking seriously and his gay manner was completely gone.

Mary looked at him with a puzzled expression and was about to inquire about his solemn attitude when Mary Jane asked, "Did you bring the mail father?"

He roused from his solemn detachment and said slowly as if choosing his words carefully, "Why yes, daughter, I did. I'll get it for you, nothing today but the paper, I read some of it down at Isaac's. Just sit there, I'll bring it to you."

There was a peculiar tone in his voice that she had never heard before. Taking the paper she unfolded it and looked at the front page. The headlines read, "Yankees Advance With Terrific Losses". Then below there was an account

of the battle and a list of casualties. Swiftly she read the names then the following words seemed to jump at her from the printed page: Dan Pointer, Hook's Point, Iowa, missing four days, believed dead.

Dropping the paper from nerveless fingers, she stared out over the snow clad prairie, lonely, cold, desolate as her heart. Slowly a tear trickled down one cheek, then the other. Finally without a word she arose from her chair and went to her room, there to fight out alone, the agony of her grief.

Mary picked up the paper and read the sad news. "So that is it, Alan, all your joking was only a pose to cover up your real feelings. Forgive me for not understanding you better. It wasn't like you at all. I wonder if I should go up and try to comfort Mary Jane."

"No, I think it is best to leave her alone, that is why she went up to her room. She knows we understand."

Mary Jane had thrown herself on her bed, taking the locket from around her neck which she had worn constantly she clasped it tightly in one hand while she wiped away the hot tears that coursed down her cheeks with the other. But Mary Jane was made of stern stuff and she possessed the courage of a soldier. After a time, she dired her tears away, combed her hair, clasped the locket quickly around her neck, squared her shoulders and went resolutely down the ladder. The news had spread to all the members of the family and she noted the deep sympathy they felt for her but she met the crisis bravely.

"I am so sorry, dear," her mother said softly.

"It's alright, mother," she answered quietly. "We have to expect these things and not be surprised. As if the hardships of this wild country were not enough to break our hearts and shatter our lives we must also have the terrors of war added to them. If I must bear all these burdens there is no use to complain. There is just one thing to do--forget. One can't go on remembering unless one wants to go crazy. So let's not talk about it any more." She picked up the quilt, folded it neatly and wrapped it up. Then she put on her wraps and started out the door.

"I'll be back after a while," she said.

"Poor Mary Jane," remarked the doctor thoughtfully. "She feels mighty bad but she can always stand on her own two feet no matter what comes. She's as sensible and dependable as anyone can be and I'm proud of her. We don't need to worry about her."

"Yes, she is a strong minded and noblespirited girl," replied her mother. "Sometimes I've thought she was a little too reserved, she never lets things get her down. But it seems she had to be that way because life has never been easy for her and only a strong minded person could bear up under all the hard knocks that come her way. I'm glad she decided to take a walk. It will give relief to her pent-up emotion as nothing else could."

Mary Jane walked swiftly down the road, head up, eyes bright. In a few moments she arrived at Isaac's store, entered and asked for Hannah.

"She's helping her mother get supper," he told her.

So she went into the kitchen where she was again met with sympathy but her courage never faltered.

"I know you feel sorry for me but please don't," she said. "I know that you folks thought a lot of Dan too so lets each carry our sorrow in our own way and try to forget it as much as possible.

Here, Hannah, is a quilt top I want you to take. It's that log cabin pattern I've been working on all winter. It's part of that other life I had expected to live but it was only a dream that never came true. I cannot make it fit into the future now so I want you to have it if you would care for it."

"I'd love to have it Mary Jane, because as you know I'm no hand at making quilts but you should try to keep it. You have spent so much time and work on it. Couldn't you keep it? You'll feel differently after a while "

"No, please take it Hannah. I don't want any reminders around. This locket I intend to wear because I feel that somehow he will know that I am not forgetting because I want to but because I have to. And now I must go. Good'by."

She hurried out of the door and Hannah and her mother stood with the quilt top spread out before them, feeling helpless in the avalanche of emotions and events that had swept over them.

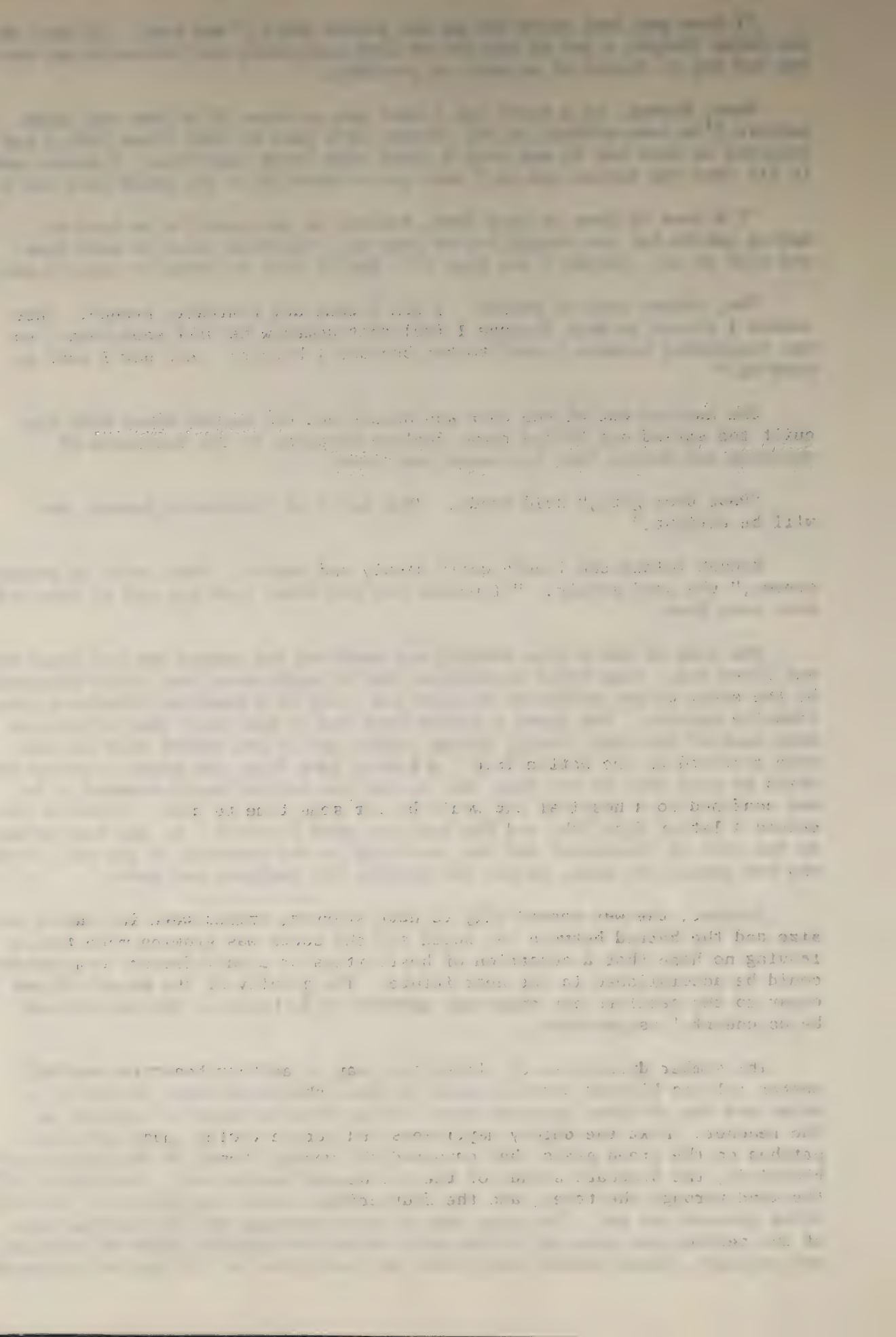
"Poor dear girl," said Mandy. "But don't be frightened Hannah, she will be alright."

Hannah folded the lovely quilt slowly and neatly. "Her cabin of broken dreams," she said softly. " I wonder how the other boys are and if they will ever come home."

The news of Dan's fate shocked and saddened the people who had known him and liked him. Some tried to believe that he might have been taken prisoner by the enemy or was seriously injured and lying in a hospital somewhere, his identity unknown. But it was a feeble hope and as the weeks went by with no more news of him they finally became reconciled to the belief that he must have perished on the battlefield. A letter came from Cash Corey in March in which he said that he had been shot in the leg and seriously wounded so he was confined to a hospital and would be for some time to come. Carolina received a letter from John and his news was more cheerful. He had been promoted to the rank of lieutenant and was assisting in the training of the new recruits who had joined the army, so for the present his position was safe.

However, the war seemed only to have started, armies were increasing in size and the hatred between the north and the south was growing more fierce leaving no hope that a cessation of hostilities or a satisfactory compromise could be accomplished in the near future. The gravity of the situation was clear to the settlers but there was nothing to do but wait for the end and be as cheerful as possible.

The somber dreariness of winter gave way to another beautiful spring. Easter lillies bloomed bravely again in their sheltered nooks on the hill-sides and the children gathered them; taking them to school to present to the teacher. Next the dainty Mayflowers and purple Violets made colorful patches on the green grass that carpeted the woods. Songs of the robins and bluebirds, the staccato sounds of the red-headed woodpeckers, the sighing of the wind through the trees, and the fluttering, scampering noises of the wood folks greeted the ear. The rosy dawn of cool mornings and the glaring rays of the setting sun gave way to the soft colors and restful tones of eventide and twilight, which soothed the nerves and heartaches of the patient pioneers.



Warm rains drenched the earth and the slender shoots of corn and oats, wheat and vegetables, protruded through the ground. Wearisome toil from dawn until dark brought restful sleep to the men, women and children, while their complete absorption in their daily work and interests pushed most of their worries into the background of their thoughts, giving them the feeling that after all, "God's in His Heaven, All's Right With the World." There was a new surge of faith and hope in their hearts that made life sweet and beautiful and rich with promise again.

The stage coach never failed to be a interesting sight and an exciting interlude in the comparatively uneventful lives led by the people. They looked forward eagerly to its regular arrival bringing the small package of mail and carrying its interesting load of travelers. The stage driver and the passengers likewise enjoyed the friendliness of the people along the way, and it became a custom of the drivers to stop often on warm, pleasant days at Dr. Stuart's for a fresh, cold drink from his rock-walled well.

The trails were good since the frost had gone out of the ground and the mud holes had dried up the stage made its trips easily and some leisure time was permissible. The driver and passengers enjoyed the pleasant conversation with the genial doctor who was glad to drop his work for a few moments. It presented a direct medium of communication with the outside world and the fluent driver delighted in telling the news to the eager doctor who listened with such keen interest and attention.

There were benches in the shade of the big oak tree that stood close to the well. Here the weary travelers seated themselves to relax from the tiresome strain of swaying along in the rough riding coach. On this day in early May there were three passengers, Mrs. S. M. Sherman, her daughter-in-law, Mrs. Charles A. Sherman, and a granddaughter Ann, three years old.

The talkative driver started in on the war news that was always of most importance, "Yep, there sure are some bloody battles bein' fought, the way I hear it," he began in his expressive manner as he sat with a hand on each knee and nodded his head violently for emphasis. "They don't put half the truth in the papers; tryin' to keep us from realizin' just what a fracas they did get into out there. Shore is a gright what human bein's will drag each other into. But I still say the Yankees will win. Why, those southerners ain't got enough sand in their craw to fight nothin'. Ain't used to such rough goings-on. They're gentlemen, don't you know? Used to ridin' around on a fine horse or in a spring cushion buggy with the niggers a doin' their work. Doggone, this is the best water I ever drank," and, getting up, he dipped the cup into the pail of cool water and drank with such apparent appreciation that the doctor chuckled and reminded him, "you always say it's the best water you ever drank."

"But I'm glad you like it so well, continued the doctor," or you might not stop so often and I certainly would miss you and your news. Maybe it is just as well, though, that the papers don't dwell on the war news too much and give too many details; it would only worry us more and worryin' never helps anything. We're in it so deep now we will just have to fight our way out, I only hope it ends soon. Both sides are fighting for a principle and there are always two sides to every question, I suppose the right side will win out, it usually does."

"Shore, I reckon so, it all depends on which side of the fence a feller is a standin' how things look to him," agreed the driver. "Well things look pretty good in these parts, crops comin' along fine, we're lucky the army ain't a trampin' all over us like it is out there. Just one more drink, then

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I s'pose we better be rollin' along, ladies."

The women had been talking with Mary and the girls and Eva had made friends quickly with the little stranger who now came up to Dr. Stuart and said with a big smile, "We are going home to see my papa, we've been away for a long time."

Dr. Stuart lifted the child up on his lap and said kindly, "Now, isn't that nice? I'm sure your papa will be very glad to see you again. Tell me, where did you get these pretty curls?"

"My mamma made them. She likes them but I don't 'cause they get all tangled up when I sleep and it pulls awful when she combs it. That lady is my mamma and this one is my grandma, would you like to see my papa too?"

The doctor acknowledged the introductions and turned to the little girl.

"Yes, I would," replied the doctor, "where does he live?"

"In Fort Dodge, he's a soldier. I'll tell him to come see you sometime and get a drink of water like we did."

"Well, I reckon we had better be gettin' started," insisted the driver, "how is the river now, bank full?"

"I think it has gone down some but you still have to ferry across. You'll make it all right. Goodbye and stop in again."

The horses started out on a fast trot after their rest and in a few minutes the coach reached the river. The stage arrived from the north and waited on the opposite side of the river for the people to cross. A boat was tied securely to a tree and the driver looked around for someone to row the passengers across. Eke Jakeway was fishing a few rods up the stream and came quickly when the driver motioned for him to do so.

"Can you ferry these people across the river?" the driver asked him.

"Why, I guess I could," the boy replied, "I've only done it a couple of times before but the river is some lower today so it ought to be easy to do."

The passengers got into the boat, the luggage and mail was quickly loaded, then the boy took the oars and pushed out into the murky water. The load was heavy and awkward but all went well until it reached the swift part of the stream. Then one of the oars caught in some underbrush that, during the high water, had been below the depth of the oars length. The boat tipped, causing one of the mail bags to slip off into the water. Frightened and excited, the boy tried to rescue it and unable to guide the boat at the same time, allowed it to swerve out of its course striking a sunken tree trunk which caused it to capsize and tumble the cargo into the water. The boy managed to grab onto a limb of the tree and teached the shore safely but the other occupants of the boat were not so fortunate.

The stage drivers could not swim so could lend no assistance. Mr. Martin, who was returning from Homer on horseback and had been watching the people, plunged into the river but he was so burdened with his clothing that he could not help them and had a hard time getting back to shore again. The elder lady could swim a little and managed to remain afloat for several rods before she became insensible; floating so close to the right bank of



the river some 300 yards below that the stage driver on that side managed to reach her and pull her ashore. However, he did not understand first aid methods or her life might have been saved. The younger lady, having the child in her arms soon sank. The child, becoming separated from her mother, floated on down stream, her little skirts keeping her afloat for some time and one of her little hands reaching up, seeming to clutch the air.

The men were frantic in their helplessness, the anguished cries of the victims ringing in their ears long after the helpless ladies were swallowed up by the river. Messengers were sent to Homer and Hook's Point from which places people came hurrying to help recover the bodies. The other two were recovered about a half mile below. Dr. Corbin of Homer tried to resuscitate the first body but too much time had elapsed and life was extinct.

Again, the countryside was shocked by another tragedy, another sacrifice in the huge toll of lives that this wild untamed country demanded in the struggle for settlement; nevertheless, people carried on their crusade unfalteringly in their efforts to subdue the uncontrolled wildness of nature and the elements, hoping to make it safer and less terrifying for coming generations.

Chapter Seven

Journey's End

Hook's Hotel experienced the busiest season of its ten years of business during the month of May of 1862. The stage carried more than its usual number of passengers; some of them stayed at the hotel for a few days to look the country over and buy a tract of land, others went on farther with another destination in view. This was a desirable country and some thought it was as far as they wished to go west. But glowing stories were also told about the grand country farther north and west.

Occasionally, a covered wagon passed through, stopping at the store to purchase a few supplies, water the oxen, horses and cattle; and rest a few hours. Then it would start on again; the cattle following behind the wagon urged along by the older children, the parents and small children riding in the wagon that creaked and lurched along, canvas top flapping and the wooden water pails swinging from the hooks on the rear of the wagon.

Isaac often stood motionless and watched the little caravan until it disappeared from sight, looking into the distance with a faraway, wistful look in his eyes. Mandy noticed him doing this and felt a vague uneasiness, but she said nothing.

He had planned to go to Keokuk the first week of June as usual to look over the display of goods and merchandise at the wholesale houses; but for the first time he failed to display his usual enthusiasm about the trip. Finally the day before he should start he came into the kitchen where Mandy was washing the dinner dishes.

"Mandy," he said a little uneasily and uncertainly as he sat down.

"Yes,?" she questioned, and Isaac was non-plussed and a bit surprised at her rather brusque manner. Did she suspect? Well, he would have to be very tactful.

"Why--uh--Frank seems to like it right well out at Yankton, don't he?"

"Oh, I guess so. Been there long enough now; I s'pose it seems like home to him," she answered with little interest.

"Yeah, that's right, just what I've been thinkin'. A feller soon fergits all about the old home and learns to like the new one. Didn't take us long to feel at home here. Never felt homesick for Indianny, have we?" Isaac said slowly as he tamped the tobacco into his pipe and struck a match on the bottom of the chair.

Mandy went on washing dishes with more than her usual brisk efficiency and Isaac, seeing that he was getting nowhere fast, went at the subject from another angle.

"That feller, Williams, who went through here a week ago with his wagon, remember?" "He said it only takes about six weeks to drive through to Yankton. There's a good trail all the way and he says the scenery sure is pretty out there."

Isaac had become so interested in his subject that he was unable to sit still longer and began pacing back and forth, talking dreamily, as if he



could see all the things he was describing. "There are hills and mountains, valleys and canyons, tall trees and funny, stunted oak trees and sunsets - that ---"

"Yes," added Mandy, "and snakes and Indians and prairie and no water and burning sun and endless miles without seeing a soul. Reckon he had his head in the clouds same as you always do," and she splashed her dishwater into the slop bucket.

"Other folks make it all right," Isaac insisted. "The stage seems to go right along without any trouble. This is a nice time of year to make a trip too. You know, Mandy --"

"Yes, I know, Isaac," she interrupted, talking slowly and emphasizing each word with a flourish of her dish rag, "I've been watching you and I know what ails you; you've got a hankerin' to pack up, get out of here and go to Yankton."

"Why, Mandy, have you been thinkin' about it, too?" Isaac asked.

"No, I certainly haven't and I've been tryin' not to believe that you have been thinkin' about leavin' here either; but knowin' you so well, I knew just what to expect when you got that wanderin' look in your eye again."

"Yes, but don't you think it would be fun to see all that new country, we've never seen a mountain or a herd of buffalo --"

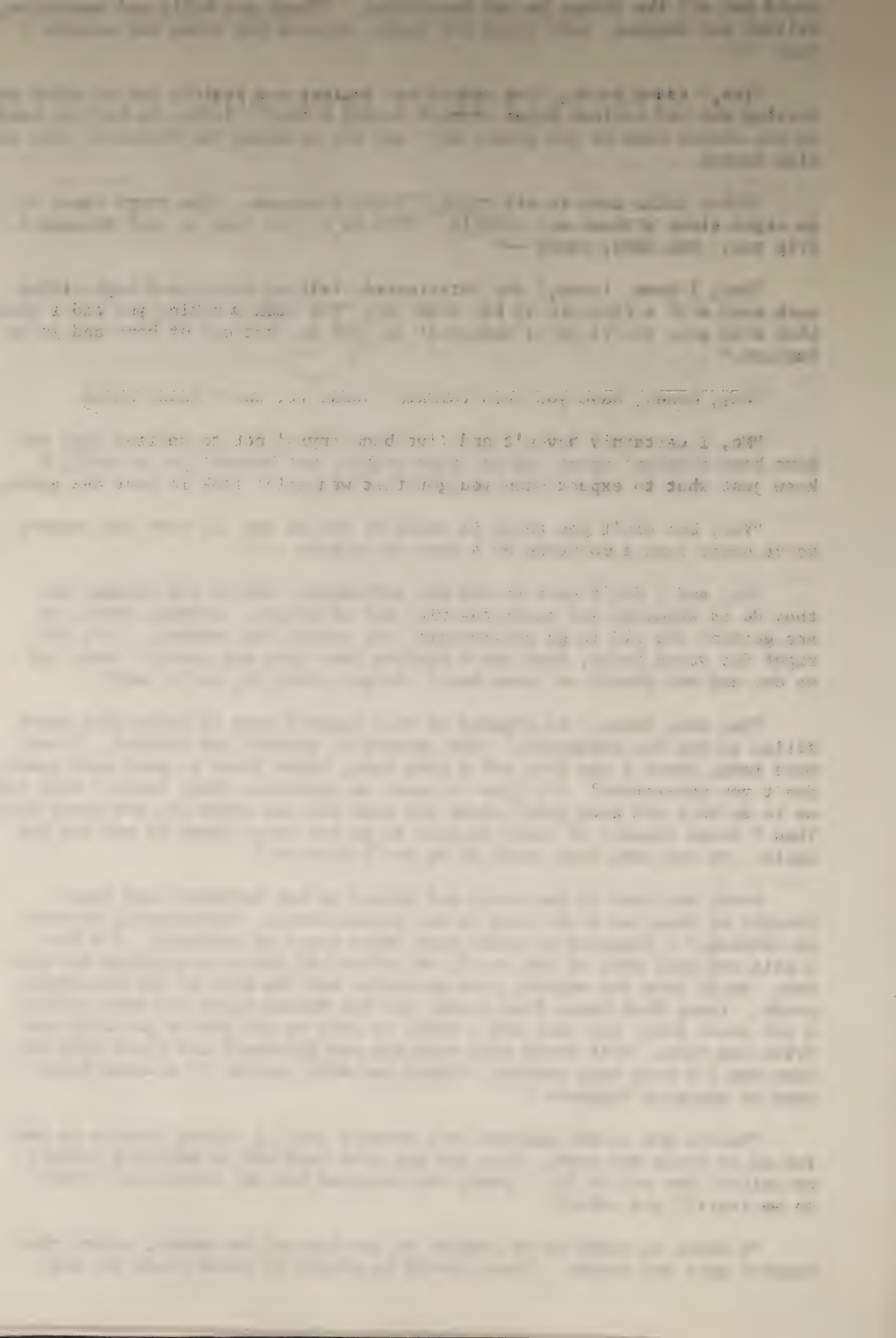
"No, and I don't want to see any buffaloes. Horrid old things, all they do is stampede and scare the wits out of people. Anyway, Isaac, we are gettin' too old to go gallivantin' off across the country. It's all right for young folks, they don't realize what they are gettin' into, but we do; and why should we leave here? Forget about it, won't you?"

"Aw, now, Mommy," he pleaded in that special tone of voice that never failed to win his arguments, "this country is gettin' too crowded. I want more room, where I can look off a long ways, where there is more open space, don't you understand? I'd like to start up somewhere else, nothin' more for me to do here but keep goin' along the same old way every day and every year. Then I kinda thought it would be nice to go out where Frank is and see him again. We can come back again if we don't like it."

Mandy sat down by the table and picked up her knitting--and Isaac thought he detected a wavering in her determination. Encouraged, he went on talking, "I figgered we could rent these rooms to somebody. I'd have a sale and sell most of the stuff, we're kind of low on everything now anyhow. We'll take two wagons, some groceries and the best of the household goods. Young Hank Mason from across the Des Moines River has been talkin' a lot about goin' out west and I might be able to get him to go along and drive one team. Will could ride with him and Elizabeth and Finch with us. That way I'd have help crossin' rivers and with repairs if a wagon broke down or anything happened."

"You've got it all planned out, haven't you? I reckon there's no use for me to argue any more, When you get your head set on anything there's no talkin' you out of it." Mandy was resigned but not persuaded. "When do we start?" she asked.

"I think we ought to be started by the last of the month, before the weather gets any hotter. There should be plenty of water along the way



from the spring rains and yet the rivers should be back to normal again so we won't likely have much trouble crossin'."

Isaac was bubbling over with enthusiasm and paced back and forth as he explained his plans. There was a radiance in his face, a new set to his shoulders, a contagious quality in his manner that caught Mandy in the spell of his sweeping ardor. The years dropped from his appearance and he was young and adventurous again, with that same magnetism of personality that had first and always after appealed to Mandy. She found herself responding to his mood as she had many times before, and listened with increasing interest as he continued.

"I'll have an announcement put in the Freeman that I am quittin' business and will sell all stock at reduced prices. Won't take long to git ride of it, and we can surely rent the house to someone. You won't feel too bad about leavin', will you Mandy?" he asked kindly, patting her affectionately on her shoulder. "We done all right comin' out here and I've always wanted to see the mountains more than anything else--".

"It's all right with me," she answered with a sweet, patient smile. Just go ahead with your business and I'll have things ready whenever you say."

"Good girl," he said, kissing her, a rare act indeed for him; indicative of his appreciation of her cooperation and his desire to express it. "Maybe I wouldn't always be thinkin' of these wild ideas if I didn't know I can depend on you to stand by me. Well, guess I'd better go make some signs to put up and get things started."

Isaac went out whistling loudly and happily but Mandy sat at the table for a long time, her knitting unheeded in her lap, her face resting in her hands, bravely reconciling herself to this new change that would soon take place in her life.

When the three younger children heard about it they were widely excited.

"Are we really goin' to see the buffaloes and wild Injuns?" Will asked his eyes sparkling with anticipation.

"I don't want to see any old Injuns," declared Elizabeth, "they shoot arrows and kill people."

"Humph!" said Will. "They wouldn't hurt us none. Papa could shoot them and scare them all away. Bet I could hit one myself. Gee, that's going to be fun. Just ridin' along with nothin' to do all day." and he danced a barefoot jig on the kitchen floor.

Finch had been listening intently, hardly able to comprehend what it all meant. He realized they were going away and one question arose in his four-year-old mind that eclipsed all other attractions of the plan,

"Mommy," he asked seriously, "Is Eva goin' with us?"

"No, dear, just our own family is going. Eva couldn't go with us 'cause she's too little to go so far from home and might get lonesome."

"Then I will too," he declared seriously. "I wouldn't have anybody to play with but Will and he don't play nice like Eva. I'll get awful lonesome, Mommy. Guess I'll stay here and live with Aunt Mary."



"No, honey, I couldn't get along without you. I'd be too lonesome without my baby."

"I'm no baby," he cried with high disdain. "I can milk a cow and do lots of things a baby can't do. Betcha I could even shoot a mean old Injun with my slingshot and put his eye out."

"My dear children!" exclaimed their mother. "Let's forget about Indians and not worry until we see them. Go on out and play now. I must start some supper."

As they walked out in the yard they saw Sarah and Hannah coming from the timber where they had been picking gooseberries, and ran to meet them and tell them the wonderful news.

They all began talking at once and it was a confused story of Indians and buffalo and Frank's place and mountains until Hannah exclaimed above the babble of voices, "for goodness sake, we can't understand what you're talking about. One talk at a time, please. What is it, Lib?"

Elizabeth explained with all the importance of her ten years, telling all she knew and gesticulating while she talked to make it more impressive.

"You mean to tell us Papa is selling out and going out west?"

"Sure, and we're goin' along," said Will.

"Of course you would but I don't want to go. Let's hurry on home and talk to the folks about it," Hannah suggested.

When Mandy had explained it to the girls, Hannah said, "I don't want to go 'way out there; can't I stay here, mother?"

"Papa and I didn't say anything about what you girls should do, you are old enough to decide for yourselves and if you want to stay here, I won't object although I do wish I didn't have to be separated from part of my family all the time. I wish your father could be content to stay here but it seems he can't," and she sighed heavily. "Maybe he won't like it out there and we can come back, that's what I'm secretly hoping for but only Time can tell."

The subject was discussed again that evening and Hannah's desire to remain at Hook's Point was finally explained. She and Bill Ervin had been going together for several months and had been making plans to be married soon, but Hannah, contrary to her usual talkative self had kept her secret from everyone so it was a surprise to her family when she told them about it.

Bill came while they were talking about it and when it was decided that they would get married in June, Bill asked if they couldn't rent the house and live there. This suited Isaac very well and Sarah could make her home with them when she was not working.

The news spread swiftly and in a few days everyone up and down the road for miles around knew that the Hooks were leaving. It was such a complete surprise, the people could hardly believe it.

"Why, it just won't be Hook's Point without Uncle Ike sackin' sugar up and beans and givin' the younguns a sack of candy," they exclaimed.

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"We sorta depend on you to take care of us," others told him, "and who is goin' to run the hotel and stage station?" they wanted to know.

Isaac was a man of action and he plunged into the business at hand and completed each part of it in a short time. He sold most of the stock on hand to the people and Roberts brought the remainder at wholesale price.

One day, Isaac rode north to the home of his brother Wes, by the ford at Boone River where Wes and Sarah were planting potatoes in the sandy soil made rich by the overflow of the river.

"Hello!" Isaac greeted them, "goin' to raise some good potatoes, I see."

"Yeah, got to have somethin' to eat next winter. I hear you're a plannin' to leave us, Ike."

"That's right."

"Seems like you got such a good start here you wouldn't want to pull up stakes and leave," remarked Wes as he apused and leaned on his hoe.

"I'll bet Mandy don't cater much to the idea, does she?" asked Sarah, in her blunt way.

"At first she didn't," admitted Isaac, "but she's beginnin' to take quite an interest now. Of course a chance to see Frank and his family means a lot to her but she says it seems like she has to be separated from part of her family one way or another. Hannah and Bill are gettin' married and Sarah will stay here too, so we will only have the three little ones left."

Wes spit out a mouthful of tobacco juice, hooked his thumbs in his suspenders and said, "Ike, I kinda envy you the spunk to pick up and go like this. It would be quite an adventure to go on a jaunt out west and see all the sights."

"Yes, you would be a good one to go," said Sarah, derisively, taking off her blue calico sunbonnet and wiping the sweat from her flushed face, "Your patience and nerve would vanish with the sight of the first skeleton and I hear there is plenty of them things along the trail."

"Guess you're right, Sarah," agreed Wes, coming down to earth at once, "I don't have that wanderin' spirit like Isaac always had. But some of us has to stay put and some has to break the way for others, so it works out pretty good all around. Now, what you got on your mind? Don't s'pose you fode down here just for the exercise?"

"No, I didn't, Wes. I've just been wondering how you folks would like to take over the hotel and stage station business. This is really the best location for it anyway. It would save the passengers a lot of time if they could change from one stage to another and get ferried across the river at the same place."

"Say, now, that wouldn't be a bad idea at all, would it, Sarah?" exclaimed Wes, instantly enthusiastic. "The boys are big enough to do the farm work and I could help around the house and row folks across the river. Stage only comes once a week so it wouldn't make so much extra work."

"Hm, I guess if Mandy has been able to cook for extra people and raise that family besides I ought to get along easy enough. We could use the extra money right well too."

"We'll build on another room this summer and be ready for winter." Wes was full of plans already. "Glad you thought of us Isaac, we'll be ready to take over whenever you leave. Just when do you figger on starting?"

"About a week from Monday, the way it looks now. Things are shaping up fine and I want to get there before it gets too dry and hot. Hank Mason is goin' to drive one team, he's a good hand, knows how to do things and isn't afraid of anything so we ought to make the trip easy. I'll be depending on you folks to take over the job and I know you'll do it right, too. I must be going now, got to help Hank fix up the wagons. Want to be ready a few days in advance because there is always plenty to look after at the last minute. Good-by."

Wes waved goodbye and watched him ride up the hill and out of sight.

"Nervy old codger, ain't he, Sarah? Starting off on such a trip at his age. I suppose it's those young ideas of his that keeps him from growing old and rusty like some of the rest of us."

"Well, I'm glad we're not going." said Sarah as she picked up the pail of potatoes and started dropping them in the hills.

By the next Saturday everything was in readiness for an early start Monday morning. Clothing was packed in strong boxes to withstand the long, hard journey. The furniture was already in the wagons, and plenty of feed for the oxen. Groceries and cooking utensils would be loaded in the morning. The wagons were new and sturdy with waterproof canvas tightly stretched over hardwood frames. The oxen were sleek and fat, in good condition for the gruelling trip ahead of them.

At ten o'clock Sunday forenoon, neighbors and friends from near and far in the surrounding community came with baskets generously filled with food to spend the day with the Hook family and to say farewell. The food was spread out on a long table under the shade of the white oak trees that had extended a welcome to Isaac when he had first seen them 13 years ago. They had sheltered his home faithfully through the burning heat of summer and the freezing cold of winter. Birds had built nests in them every year and serenaded Hook's Point with their early morning songs.

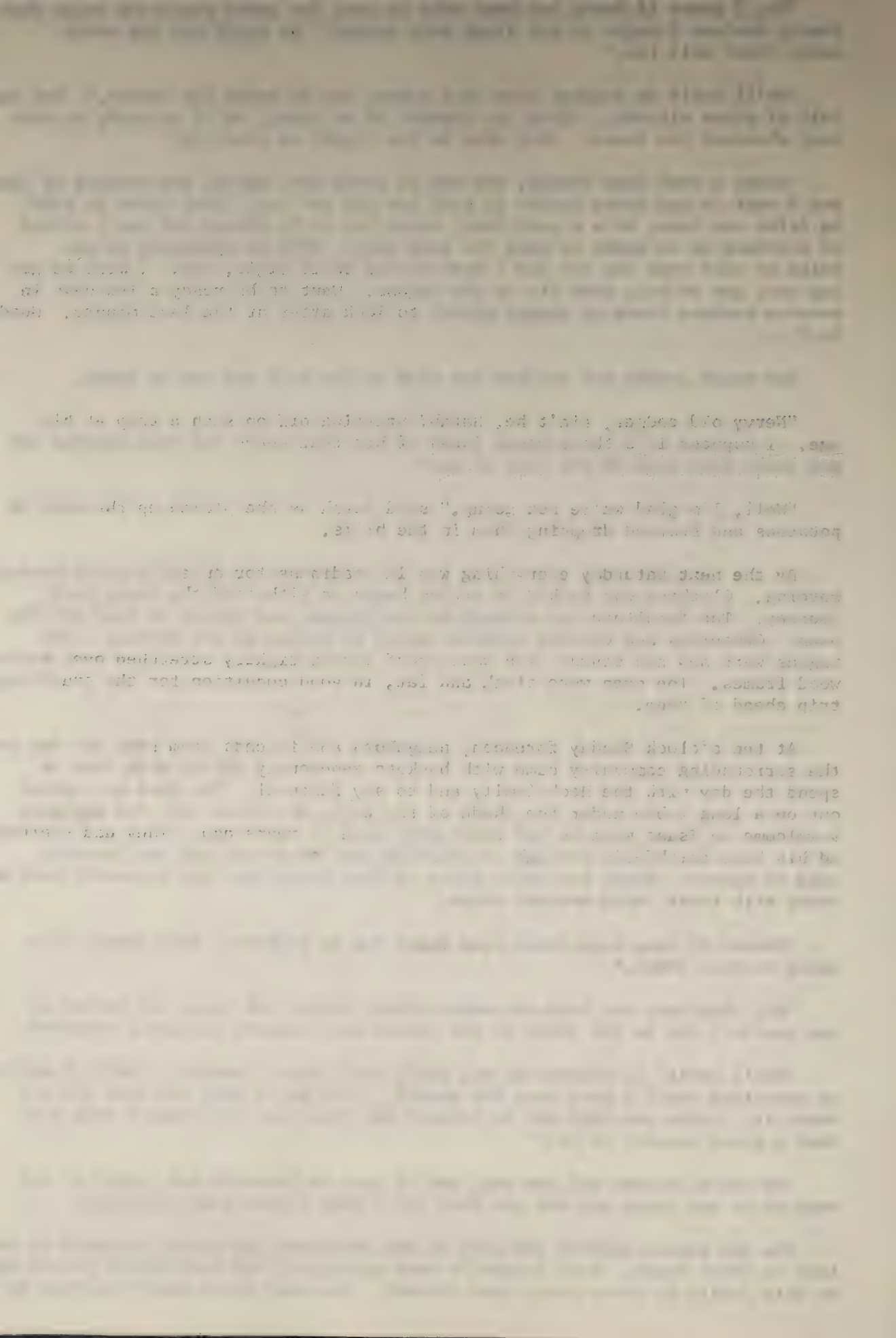
"Wonder if they have trees like these out in Yankton," said Isaac, "I'm going to miss these."

"All they have out here are some scrawny little oak trees and cactus so you couldn't lay in the shade if you wanted to," someone teasingly remarked.

"Still tryin' to discourage me, ain't you?" Isaac laughed. "Well, I won't be satisfied until I have seen for myself. I'll write back and tell you all about it. Maybe you will all be hittin' the trail out west when I tell you what a grand country it is."

"We won't believe all you say, you'll just be homesick and tryin' to get some of us out there and see you that way," they argued good naturedly.

The day passed swiftly and late in the afternoon the guests prepared to return to their homes. Fond farewells were exchanged, and best wishes heaped upon this family by their misty eyed friends. The many years spent together de-



pendent on one another, at all times concerned with the welfare of one another had cemented the bonds of their friendship together as tightly as those between the members of a family. It was a sad time and a glad time, but all left with a cheery smile of farewell for that was the spirit of the early settler, unflinching, resolute and optimistic.

The family retired early that evening for they wished to rise at dawn. Just before midnight Isaac woke with sharp cramps in his stomach and feeling terribly sick; getting up he went outside where he vomited violently. Alarmed Mandy went to the door, anxious to do something for him that might bring relief but he continued to gag and vomit and strained so hard she became thoroughly frightened.

"Don't strain so hard, pop," she implored him, "you'll break something and kill yourself. Come in and lie down, maybe you will feel better in a few minutes."

Isaac walked slowly and painfully back to the bed. "I don't see what can be the matter with me," he moaned, "I never was so sick before in all my life."

"Maybe you've got some kind of stomach trouble," Mandy said, "You know you have complained a few times about a pain there. I s'pose you should have seen the doctor about it before."

"Oh, it's nothing serious, I'm feeling a little better. I'll be all right."

They went to bed again; Mandy and Finch who slept with Isaac, lay down at the foot of the bed to give him more room and make him more comfortable.

After a time Isaac became quiet, almost too quiet, while relief over his apparent recovery turned to alarm. Getting up, Mandy leaned over him, touching his shoulder gently, "Are you all right, pop? Are you asleep?" she asked fearfully.

He did not answer, but lay there unmoving and she could not tell if he were breathing or not. "Isaac she called sharply, shaking him. Still he did not answer and stark terror gripped her. Was he? No, oh no, he couldn't be --

Desperately, she called Hank and Hannah and Sarah who came as fast as they could, frightened by her tone.

"Something's wrong with Isaac," she told Hank. "Go quickly and get the doctor. I'm afraid he has let us, oh hurry."

Hank ran out of the house and up the road to the doctor's house as fast as his long legs could carry him. In the meantime Mandy rubbed Isaac's hands and called to him but there was no response.

In a few minutes that had seemed like hours to the anxious wife, the doctor came. Quickly bending over Isaac he felt of his pulse and tried to detect some signs of life.

"What seems to be the matter with him?" he asked Mandy.

"I don't know, Alan," she cried forlornly, but explained the best she could about his sudden illness.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
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DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICS
5712 S. DICKINSON AVE.
CHICAGO, ILL. 60637

TO: [Name]
FROM: [Name]
SUBJECT: [Subject]

DATE: [Date]

I have received your letter of [Date] and am glad to hear that you are interested in [Subject].

I am currently working on [Subject] and would be happy to discuss it with you.

I am looking forward to hearing from you again.

Very truly yours,
[Name]

[Name]
[Address]
[City, State, Zip]

Enclosed are [Number] copies of [Subject].

I am sure you will find them of interest.

I am looking forward to your reply.

Sincerely,
[Name]

[Name]
[Address]
[City, State, Zip]

I am sure you will find them of interest.

I am looking forward to your reply.

Dr. Stuart blew his breath into Isaac's mouth, hoping to restore his breathing but to no avail. He appeared to breathe a couple of times but that was all.

"I'm afraid there is nothing I can do, Mandy," he finally said gently. "I think he must have strained so hard that it caused some kind of internal hemorrhage. Or it may be that his heart was weak too and the excitement of planning and preparing for this trip was too much for it."

Mandy sobbed brokenly and despairingly. What was she to do now? With everything all packed to go away, everything so completely upset. She did not know which way to turn.

"If only we hadn't planned this trip. I wish I had refused to go, maybe this wouldn't have happened then," she cried bitterly. "I've had an uneasy feeling all along that it was a mistake."

"Please don't make yourself more miserable," pleaded Dr. Stuart. "It couldn't be helped. These things just seem to happen, we don't know how or why; and it was a wonderful way for him to go, he didn't have to suffer long, and think how fortunate you are that it happened here and not far out on the prairie miles from everyone, along the trail somewhere. But it's awfully hard I know, such a terrible shock. Hank, you go up home and tell Mary to come and stay here with her the rest of the night. Then when you return, I'll help decide what to do next."

Will and Elizabeth had been awakened by all the confusion and clung to their mother, frightened by all this strange behavior.

"My dear children," she tried to break it to them gently, "your father is dead."

Finch tried hard to grasp the meaning of her words but it was beyond the comprehension of his childish mind.

"What does dead mean, Mommy?" he asked seriously.

"It means, dear, that he has gone to sleep and will never wake up again. They will take him away and we will never see him anymore. He can't work or take care of us. Oh, what will I do?" she cried, overcome by the enormity of her responsibilities.

"Don't cry, Mommy," begged the little boy, putting his arms around her lovingly. "I'll help take care of you. Will and me can do lots of things to help, can't we Will?"

"Sure." agreed Will, anxious to promise anything that would restore a smile on his mother's face, at the same time wondering vaguely what two little boys could do.

Mary Stuart came and the two sisters clasped each other in a wordless embrace of understanding.

"Just don't try to tell me about it now, Mandy." Mary said after the first agony of Mandy's grief had passed. "Cry it out and you'll feel better. Here, sit down in this chair and I'll get the Bible and read to you, that always helps."

Mary got the Bible, seated herself in a chair near her sister then holding

one hand sympathetically, began reading softly:

"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever."

Gradually the soothing words took effect, Mandy dried her eyes bravely and began to think of the immediate problems at hand that needed her attention. The helpful influence of action eased some of the ache in her heart.

"I'll go up and see John Ballard right away," offered Dr. Stuart. "He'll take care of Isaac and make the coffin there in his shop. Mary can stay with you the rest of the night and I'll be back soon."

Other people had been aroused by the unusual activity at that time of night and some of the townspeople had assembled, quiet, solemn, hoping there might be something they could do to show their sympathy.

"There's nothing more to do tonight, nothing at all," Mandy told them sorrowfully. "I haven't had time to think or realize. Maybe in the morning, if you can come back."

"Just let us know if there is anything at any time," they urged her and she thanked them assuring them she would.

The funeral was set for two o'clock on Tuesday afternoon the 28th of June. The house was filled with people and a great crowd stood out in the yard, true friends who had come to pay their last respects to one who had finished his work on earth at the age of 51 years.

Reverend Doran of Boone preached the sermon, choosing for his text the familiar passage, "In my Father's home are many mansions --" At the close he said, "Isaac didn't get to see the mountains or the glory of the western sunsets but he has had dreams that were as beautiful and satisfying. And he has enjoyed the vivid colors of the rainbow because he did not spend his time constantly looking down trying to find the pot of gold at the foot of the rainbow but gazed ever upward where his soul now rests in peace. Amen."

The solemn procession moved slowly along to the cemetery, the casket riding in one of the covered wagons that was to have taken him far away on a long, glorious journey but which could now carry him only a short distance, the final journey, to the little cemetery where the trees and brush were cleared away to make room for the grave.

Out of all the chaos of her thoughts and perplexities, Mandy gradually emerged, assisted by her courage and good judgment, solving her problems to good advantage. Naturally, she wanted to go on living in her old home so she sold the barroom to Bill and Hannah. They moved it to the two acres of land they bought from Mandy across the road and a few rods north paying for it with

two cows. Bill farmed the Hook land and the rent helped Mandy with her expenses; she still had some money they had expected to use on their trip, so she did not worry about the immediate future.

She wrote to Frank telling him of Isaac's death and suggesting that he move back again, if he thought he could make as good a living there as in Yankton. She would certainly feel that she had someone to depend on then and help her with her business and raising the small children. She was terribly lonely but the insistent demands of her family and daily interests and duties occupied her time and thoughts so in time her grief seemed less unbearable. Gradually she picked up the broken threads of her life and began weaving them into another pattern that brought a degree of satisfaction and comfort to her as the days passed.

Chapter Eight

The Tenycke Farm

The stage pulled slowly into Hook's Point on a hot, sultry day in July, 1862. The horses were sweaty and tired and did not respond to the driver's desire to dash into town with a great flourish and come to a sudden halt, but stopping, they relaxed to a restful position as the driver went about his business.

One passenger alighted and looked keenly at the sleepy little village, quiet in its noonday siesta. This tall stranger carried a cane and a fine leather traveling bag; his keen eyes took a quick survey of the surroundings and his alert step seemed to betoken a man of action.

Turning in to Robert's store, he found the proprietor dozing behind the counter. The entrance of this well equipped stranger roused Roberts to action.

"Howdy, stranger," he said with a smile, "What can I do for you?"

The man returned the greeting and asked jokingly, "A mug of beer goes pretty good on a hot day, doesn't it? Or do you keep it here?"

"Sure, everything from beer to buttons. I reckon a bartender would be the last person in the world to say "No" to that order, so here y'are."

The stranger paid for the beer and drank it thirstily, then resumed the conversation.

"Pretty good country you got around here, according to some reports."

"Yeah, we think so. Got possibilities, anyhow," answered Roberts.

"I'm looking around for a place to buy if I can find what I want. I'm Henry Tenycke from Casanovia, New York."

"Glad to know you, sir. My name is Lyman Roberts. New York, eh? Good long ways from home, ain't you?"

"That's a fact and these stage coaches sure can stretch a few miles into a long day. What hotel accommodations do you have around here, where a man could clean up and rest a bit?"

"Why, Mandy Hook, who lives in that rambling house just north across the ravine could put you up. Her husband died a few weeks ago so she has gone on with the hotel business which, of course, ain't much since the stage station was moved up by the river. You can board there too if you're stayin' a while."

"Sounds good. I calculate on staying several days and lookin' around. See you later," the stranger said and left.

Henry Tenycke hired a horse and spent the next few days riding out over the prairie looking for a choice piece of land. From the first day he had been most interested in the south half of section six which lay south of Isaac's quarter section and he finally closed the deal. He was a man of great executive capacity and began at once making preparations to build a house and barns, the size of which aroused the curiosity of the community.

He hired several men in the vicinity to cut logs to be sawed into lumber. The old sawmill formerly operated by Isaac had long ago fallen into disrepair and proved useless so Tenycke bought a new one and moved it to the ravine on the east side of the road. Here the logs were sawed into lumber and when he had an ample supply he engaged Charlie Jones to do his carpenter work.

The sawmill was operated by steam power and Tenycke realized that a grist mill would be a shrewd business investment as well as a great convenience to the town. First of all Charlie built the mill, a commodious, three story structure. On the grassy rise of ground south of the mill, on the opposite side of the road, Charlie started building the house. Having sawed and fitted all the pieces of lumber in the walls and having nailed the sections together, the men of the community were then called in to help raise them; fastening them securely together and next putting on the siding. Charlie was an expert carpenter and every piece and section fitted perfectly.

When the house was finished, Tenycke hired Mr. and Mrs. Hi Carpenter and their son Can, from New York, to conduct the business, Mr. Carpenter acting as foreman. He assisted in all the building that was done and superintended the farm work. Several men were hired and the constant pounding and sawing resulted in the rapid progress of this large scale undertaking.

One warm July day, Angie McIntosh walked to the home of her parents for one of her frequent visits. She stopped at the well to draw up a pail of fresh water before joining her mother where she sat on the bench in the cool shade of the oak trees.

"You look so warm, aren't you all tired out?" Mary asked with concern.

"Oh, not much, but the sun is hot. It seemed to burn right through my bonnet," Angie replied as she took the bonnet off and fanned herself. "It's a miserable day for the men working in the harvest fields; I told Lem to be careful but he just laughed at me. He can stand more heat than anyone I ever saw. I see you have all your wheat bound into sheaves."

"Yes, Dick and the girls helped and it didn't take long because we don't have a large field like you and Lem. Papa cut it and that was a big help, also the weather was cooler when we were working yesterday. We've all felt kind of tired today though and haven't done much work."

"Where is Mary Jane?" inquired Angie.

"She must be in the house somewhere. The last I saw of her she was working on a hat and it wasn't going any too well; she was about to lose her patience I think."

"I'll go find her," said Angie, getting up.

She went into the house and looked around, but not finding her sister, Angie climbed the stairs and peeked into the upstairs room. Mary Jane was lying on the bed, sound asleep, while under the bed lay the troublesome hat and flowers and ribbons were scattered about on table and chairs. Quickly Angie picked up the trimmings, rescued the hat from under the bed, tiptoed over to the stairs and descended.

"Look here," she said to her mother with a laugh as she sat down again. "I found this under the bed and she is sound asleep. I'm going to finish it for her as a surprise. She certainly did a nice job braiding the straw."

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"Yes, she did, and the straw is so nice this year; long, golden stems that work up beautifully."

"I never could do that right," Angie said wishfully.

"Maybe you don't soak the straw enough, it has to be very soft or it will break. She has some left, I'll show you again. See, now. Use two straws for each strand and braid them just like you do your hair. Then sew them together to make it the size and shape you want."

"Yes, it looks easy but it never is when I try it. But I love to trim hats so I'll fix this one for Mary Jane. I'm going to turn the brim back in the front and put these pink and blue flowers around the edge to make a pretty frame for her face. I don't know if it will suit her or not but she can give it to me if it doesn't."

"I think she wants it all right and I never saw her so particular. She's been so kind of quiet and secretive lately, she must have something on her mind but I thought she would tell me when she wants me to know so I haven't said anything. Maybe she will tell you."

"She might at that. Now, how does this look? I plan for her to wear it on the back of her head and won't she look sweet with these flowers making a frame for her rosy cheeks and blue eyes. This wide ribbon bow and streamers look very nice in the back, don't you think?"

"That's lovely, Angie. You should have been a milliner."

"Well, if I trim hats for all my sisters, I might learn to be one, I'll have plenty of practice. Mary Jane, come here!" she called loudly.

In a few minutes Mary Jane appeared in the door.

"Someone call me?" she asked sleepily. "Oh, it's you, Angie! she cried with delight. "When did you come? Have you been here long?"

"Long enough to fix your hat that I dragged out from under your bed. Here put it on. No, that isn't right, I'll show you. How nice you look, you ought to see yourself."

"Does it really, mother?" she asked doubtfully.

"It is very pretty dear. Go in the house and look in the mirror."

Mary Jane did this and came back smiling happily. "It's grand, Angie. Thank you so much, I just love it as you fixed it. Really I got made at it and threw it under the bed -- just tired of it--"

"Hm, there goes my hat," said Angie. I thought if you didn't want it I'd take it. But I won't mind if I can find someone to trade secrets with, I never like to tell one to anybody unless they have something to tell me. Don't know of anyone with a secret, do you?"

Mary Jane blushed and looked away. No one said anything for a time. At last Angie said, "How about you Maidie? using their pet name, "How does it happen you want a new hat so badly? You aren't getting serious about that teacher, Frank Layton, are you?"



"Well, if you must know, I suppose I will have to relieve your curiosity. This is as good a time to break the news as any other. You have guessed right, Frank and I are planning to be married August tenth."

"Oh, so soon, Mary, I mean--you haven't known him very long," stammered Angie.

"About as long as you knew Lem and you seem to be getting along all right. Frank has rented a small farm, the Spicer Place northeast of here, and he thought we might as well be married now and move on instead of waiting until spring. To tell you the truth, I am not so crazy about teaching school, I'd rather keep house; and now that you have found out what you wanted to know how about telling your secret -- if you have one?"

"Oh, yes, mine. What was it now? Oh, it isn't very certain yet but Lem is talking about moving out to Boulder, Colorado this fall. He doesn't like farming here very well and thinks he would be better satisfied out there; the climate interests him. He plans to go right after corn picking."

"Going way out there!" exclaimed Mary Jane. "I'll only be moving about eight miles and it seems like a terribly long ways. You don't want to go, do you, Angie?"

"Sometimes I do and sometimes I don't. I suppose I'll get awfully homesick but as Lem says, if we don't like it out there we can come back. It doesn't make much difference to me, whatever Lem decides will be all right."

"You always were the most easy going person in the world," remarked her mother. "But let's go in and cook some coffee. We have plans to make with a wedding to prepare for and it always seems easier to think and plan over a cup of coffee."

"And some of your fresh bread, mother, suggested Angie. "I smelled it when I was in the house, wish I could bake bread like you do."

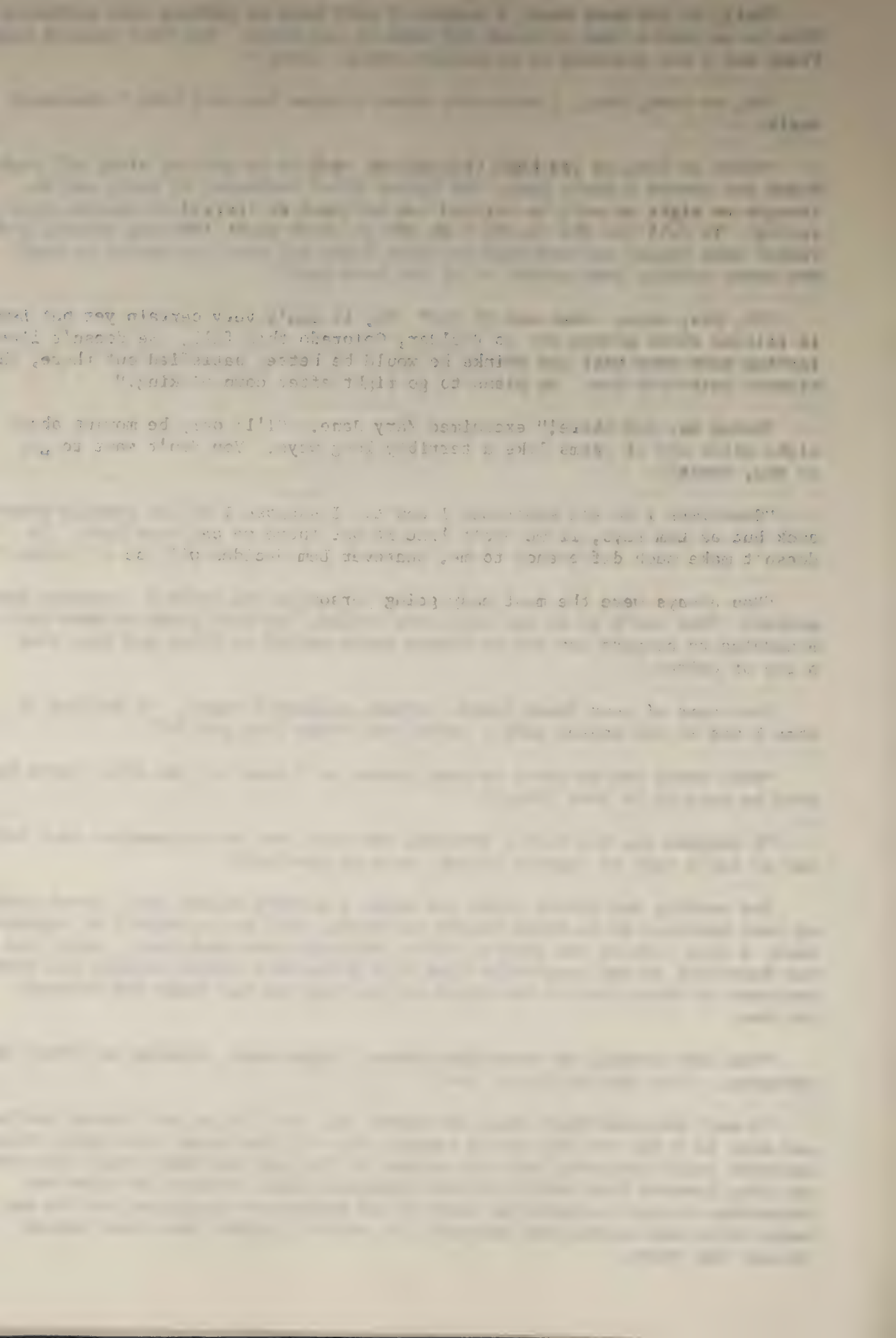
"Wait until you've baked as many loaves as I have and you will almost be able to bake it in your sleep."

"I suppose so, but that's entirely too much work to contemplate on a hot day so let's talk of lighter things, such as weddings."

The wedding day dawned clear and warm, a perfect August day. Frank looked very handsome as he stood beside his bride, tall and scholarly in appearance, a fine looking man with his fair complexion and dark hair. Mary Jane was beautiful in her longed-for blue silk dress with puffed sleeves and rows and rows of white lace on the skirt and wearing the hat Angie had trimmed for her.

"You look lovely, my beautiful sister," Angie said, kissing her after the ceremony. "You look so happy, too."

"I am," declared Mary Jane, and meant it. The little gold locket had been put away in a tin box and buried beneath the old tree trunk where many other memories still lingered, but were a part of the past and Mary Jane's philosophy of life, learned from heartbreak and disappointment, refused to allow her yesterdays to cast a shadow on today's and tomorrow's happiness; so she was a happy bride and started her married life with a faithful love that lasted through the years.



Did the buried locket ever reveal a secret? Many years later, a letter came to Mrs. Layton -- a letter postmarked "Denver, Colorado" --. It was written by the supposedly dead Dan Pointer, who, having been wounded was an invalid for some time but had now regained his health in the west and was, like herself, happily married.

Frank and Angelina Hook returned from Yankton in September and Mandy was glad that she could shift many of her responsibilities to Frank's broad, capable shoulders. She took special pride in her two grandchildren, Ike, six years old named for his grandfather and Ella, four years old. The family stayed at Mandy's for a time while Frank made his plans for the future. He liked carpenter work and any work connected with a sawmill so he reasoned that it would be a good idea to live right in town where he could get work on the Tenycke place and possibly other jobs nearby.

Mandy had no use for such a large house so she sold the log section to Frank together with five acres of land across the road north of the Tenycke place, and moved the house there. Mandy sold the frame structure to Ike Hanley who moved it to his farm northeast of town and Frank built a lean-to kitchen on to the brick section so she had a comfortable home of ample size for her small family.

Frank worked at the Tenycke farm during the fall where the buildings went up with amazing speed. The cattle barn was an extremely large building, sizeable enough to accomodate a hundred cows and ten teams of horses with a wide alleyway through which a team and wagon could be driven to unload feed. Tenycke and Hi Carpenter had bought several yoke of oxen and with the help of hired men, had broken up large patches of the prairie sod for corn and oats the next spring. The great enterprise that Tenycke was launching had only begun, but November days grew cold and stormy and he was anxious to return home before travel became too bad so he left, with orders for Hi to manage the work as if it were his own, planning to return in the spring to finish the building and stock up the place as he desired.

Stevens was in charge of the sawmill and gristmill and he and Frank were busy during the winter; settlers came from long distances to have their wheat ground into fine flour and their corn ground into meal. The pinch of the war was making itself felt more keenly all the time as money became more scarce and food supplies went up in price making it necessary for the settlers to practice the greatest economy and thrift to get along. Sugar and coffee were hard to get and high priced, so coffee was used sparingly and brown sugar and sorghum were substituted for cane sugar for sweetening.

The kraut barrel was filled in every home and like the quilting parties, kraut making presented an opportunity for a social time during which the ladies flocked to first one home then another as they made their rounds.

A baby son arrived at the home of Dr. Stuart the tenth of September and the women met there first to make the kraut and help Mary catch up with her work. The new baby was the most popular individual there, and Eva was so proud of him that she hardly had time to play with Finch and the other two children, Ike and Ella, who had entered the small realm of their childish friendship. Finch regarded the baby with mild enthusiasm when Eva tried to describe his charms.

"Don't you think Eddie is sweet?" she asked with shining eyes.

But Finch was unimpressed. "Aw, he's all right, but babies cry too much.

I don't like 'em when they cry. Let's go out and swing on the grapevine, Ike can push us and we can swing way out like Will does."

"I don't like to swing out so far, I get dizzy, don't you Ella?"

Ella would nod her head emphatically and the boys decided to go on out and leave the girls to the house. Finally the women sent them out so they wouldn't bother the baby and so that they could continue with their kraut making.

Each lady had her job and took turns but the most particular one was shredding the cabbage. The cutter was a wooden board about three feet long and ten inches wide with sides about two inches high. In the center were four sharp blades placed slantwise in the board. When the head of cabbage was pushed over the blades or knives, it was shredded very fine and fell into the barrel below where layers of cabbage were alternated with layers of salt and the secret of success lay in the proper amount of salt sprinkled over the cabbage. Aunt Martha McKinney was the official "salter". No one could salt it as perfectly as she did. With the crock held securely in her left arm she sprinkled the salt around over the cabbage with her right hand, stirring the mixture slightly and occasionally tasting it to see if it were just right.

How good the kraut did taste in the winter with some fresh or salt pork. Boys and girls always teased for a bite of the kraut before it was placed in a skillet with some meat fryings and heated.

Luckily for the people, they were nearly self sufficient in these trying times and by their efforts and ingenuity managed to have plenty of good, substantial food; more hogs and cattle were being raised so bread and meat kept their bodies strong and healthy. They butchered beef during the coldest part of the winter and kept it frozen, using it as needed. The tallow was rendered and used for making candles and soap. When melted it was poured into the molds whose twelve cylindrical holes about ten inches deep and one inch in diameter, soon shaped beautiful candles. Kerosene lamps were used generally, but the oil was expensive and hard to get so the people cheerfully used the tallow candles during this emergency.

When pork butchering time came the large iron kettle was filled with water out of doors, and when the water was boiling hot, the hog that had fallen from a shot or a blow on the head, then stuck with a sharp knife to allow for bleeding, was plunged into the butchering barrel and scraped clean of every bristle. The men worked together at this job, going from one place to another, until all were through. The hams, shoulders and side meat were placed in a barrel and covered with a brine made of salt, brown sugar and salt peter. After about six weeks the meat was hung in a small smokehouse where smoke from hickory wood permeated the pieces of meat, giving them a delicious flavor. When this process was finished, the meat was wrapped in cloth and paper and hung in the attic.

Sausage was "fried down" placed in pails or stone jars and covered with lard. The fat was rendered out in the large iron kettle in the back yard and the snowy white lard was put away in stone jars, the future foundation for flaky biscuits and luscious pies for hungry people.

All the extra tallow, and rancid lard left over from the preceding year, was made into soap in the spring by boiling with lye made from ashes. Making lye was a somewhat technical job; to do that a layer of straw was placed in the bottom of a barrel with a perforated bottom; which was set on a grooved inclined board and when water was poured over the ashes, it made lye which

drained off into an earthen container.

Tallow combined most easily with the lye. All the cracklings from the lard were cooked with some of the lye solution until the chunks were eaten up; this soap was brown in color but was just as good as the other except that it was not as attractive in appearance. Usually this made soft soap.

In their efforts to get along, the people worked hard and found little time to dwell on their misfortunes or the sad condition of their country. Life goes on, demanding, interesting, with the saving grace of hope and fulfillment. As the tragedies of '62 faded into the past, the people went on into the year of '63, with a new challenge to fate and new courage to meet it.

Chapter Nine

Covered Wagon on the Trail

Patches of snow still clung to the south side of the hills and lay in small, dirty drifts along the rail fences, when Henry Tenycke returned to Hook's Point the first week of April. But the warm sunshine of the longer days played havoc with the snow sending small rivulets of water flowing into the ravines and sloughs; the high ground dried, and when warm showers fell, the earth settled and became firm again. Henry was pleased with the work that had been accomplished during his absence and his enthusiasm over his project increased daily.

Stopping off at Des Moines he bought wagons, horses, oxen and cows; his large purchases attracted men and when he told them about his farm, several men who were interested in securing work for the summer asked for jobs. Tenycke hired twelve of them and a few days afterward the procession of men, driving teams and wagons, riding horses, and driving cattle, arrived at the farm. The hired men boarded at Carpenters and Mrs. Carpenter hired a girl to help her with the cooking and care of the spacious house.

As soon as the fields were dry, oats and wheat were sowed on part of the ground and corn planting was started the tenth of May. This was a slow, tedious process and many days passed before it was completed. One man marked the field into lines three feet apart, north and south, then another crossed the first lines with others, three feet apart, going east and west. One man dug a hill with a hoe, another dropped the kernels of corn and a third man covered it up.

Oats and wheat turned the black fields into vast expanses of bright green as the sturdystems grew rapidly; the hills of corn made green checks on the ground and then the men hitched the horses to the rude one-row cultivators and traveled up and down the straight rows covering the grass and weeds with damp, rich soil. Tenycke was very particular about his work and expected his men to do their work thoroughly and well; his ideas were not always practical but he listened to the advice of his foreman and together, they worked out the problems. Being a reasonable, intelligent boss, his men respected him and worked diligently; he paid good wages and treated his men as equals; and there was a satisfying air of comradeship and cooperation between him and his help that kept the work going easily and successfully.

With the farm work well under way, Tenycke turned his attention to more building. Frank Hook and Stevens had a large quantity of lumber sawed so Tenycke hired Charlie Jones to construct another large building to be used as a milk house. It was located on the east side of the road and equipped with large milk tanks into which the milk was strained and poured, allowed to stand until the cream had risen, then skimmed and the cream churned. Later the butter was taken to Boone and sold to the stores there.

Digert, the buttermaker had great difficulty in keeping the milk cool and making good quality butter during the warm weather, so Tenycke instructed his men to build an icehouse in the side of the hill near the foot of the ravine. This was merely a cave dug in the hill side and boarded up with lumber in preparation for storing ice during the winter.

Gradually the various occupations on the farm adjusted themselves into an efficient, smooth running system and Tenycke was confident that by the

next spring everything would be working out as he had anticipated. He was not making any great display of power or money or putting on any great airs because of the large scale of his enterprise. He was laying the foundation for a business venture that would benefit the town and community and the people realized it.

In comparison with the other farmers around the country this was an immense outlay. With their 20 or 40 or at most 60 acres of land under cultivation, those large fields made their small ones look like garden spots.

But each farmer had all he could take care of with his slow, inefficient tools and any spare time he might have could be spent working on the Tenycke farm thereby making a few extra dollars which were very welcome to help fill the usually flat pocketbooks.

Since Isaac's death the town had been without a regular barroom or tavern and Roberts sold beer on a very small scale because it did not work in well with his store trade which had expanded most satisfactorily. He had the only store in Hook's Point so naturally drew trade from all the country while the Tenycke farm had increased his customers considerably. The mail, carried by the stage was left at his store and he therefore combined the duties of storekeeper, postmaster and bartender.

Bill Ervin had tired of farming after tending Mandy's place for two years so he sold his house to Frank, built a small frame house in town, where he worked by the day and made a good living. This left vacant the log house in which Frank had been living so a man by the name of Orvis bought it and started a saloon there.

School opened the first of September for a full term of nine months. Ann Richey had been succeeded by Mr. Covil and Mr. Greenwood and when the boys and girls arrived at the schoolhouse that fine day they were greeted by still a different teacher for Clara Stuart was in charge. Teachers were scarce and though Clara was only fourteen years old she had completed the required work, passed her examinations and was qualified to teach.

Many of her pupils were older and larger than she but she had the spunk and determination to match the most mischievous pupil. She was short and plump, friendly and goodnatured. There was a sparkle in her eyes, a compelling quality in her manner that swept the most dilatory pupil along with the appealing ardor of her vitality and vivacious manner.

Dick, Minnie and Eva Stuart, Ike, Ella, Elizabeth, Will and Finch Hook were her loyal subjects. The discipline of the pupils and the preparation of the school work would have been a task for an experienced teacher but Clara's courage never failed. Her eager, ambitious nature prompted her to do many things to make the work interesting, not only in the school but also in the community. One Friday night each month she invited the parents and children to come and enjoy a social time. Spelling bees and Arithmetic contests entertained the crowd for a time then the people visited, while the ladies made coffee on the box-shaped heating stove and passed sandwiches when the coffee was ready.

Teacher and parents became acquainted and with the cooperation thus inspired, the children took a more active interest in their work and Clara enjoyed amazing success with her pupils.

Although Clara received but \$20.00 a month she saved her money carefully and in January had enough to buy the one thing she had always wanted, a

1. The first part of the report is a general introduction to the subject of the study. It discusses the importance of the study and the objectives of the research. It also provides a brief overview of the methodology used in the study.

2. The second part of the report is a detailed description of the study area. It includes information about the location of the study area, the population of the study area, and the characteristics of the study area. It also discusses the data sources and the methods used to collect the data.

3. The third part of the report is a detailed analysis of the data. It includes a description of the data, a discussion of the results of the analysis, and a comparison of the results with the results of previous studies. It also discusses the implications of the results for the study area.

4. The fourth part of the report is a conclusion and a list of recommendations. It summarizes the findings of the study and provides recommendations for future research. It also discusses the limitations of the study and the strengths of the study.

5. The fifth part of the report is a list of references. It includes a list of the books, articles, and other sources used in the study.

6. The sixth part of the report is a list of appendices. It includes a list of the tables, figures, and other materials used in the study.

7. The seventh part of the report is a list of glossary. It includes a list of the terms used in the study and their definitions.

8. The eighth part of the report is a list of index. It includes a list of the topics covered in the study and the pages where they are discussed.

9. The ninth part of the report is a list of acknowledgments. It includes a list of the people who helped in the study and their contributions.

10. The tenth part of the report is a list of notes. It includes a list of the notes taken during the study and their relevance to the study.

melodeon. Mary Stuart loved music and Clara appeared to have inherited this love and talent for it. Mary taught her how to play the little organ and this brought many pleasant hours to the home of the Stuart family. Most of the prayer meetings were held there during that winter and the guests joined in singing their favorite hymns.

A newcomer during the winter was "Swede" Highlander, who had come over from Sweden only a few years prior to that time. He arrived on the stage one cold day with an accordion under one arm and a knapsack under the other. He strode into Orvis' tavern and demanded a mug of beer.

"Ay niver see so cold a place since ay left the old counthrie," he said placing his belongings on the floor by his feet. "A feller should wait 'til summer time to thravel in these snowbanks. Ay am so hongry ay could just about eat von whole box of hardtack and dhrink a gollon of coffee. Vare do we eat?"

"Well, I don't hardly know, stranger. We don't have a hotel anymore. You don't happen to be looking for a job, do you?" asked Orvis

"Ay might. Vare is von?"

"Hi Carpenter on the place south of here is wanting someone to cut ice to put in his ice house. Do you know anything about that kind of work?"

"Ay shure do. Ay cut ice and packed it in the old counthrie to keep the fish fresh."

"You might go and see him then, I think he would give you a job and you could board there, too."

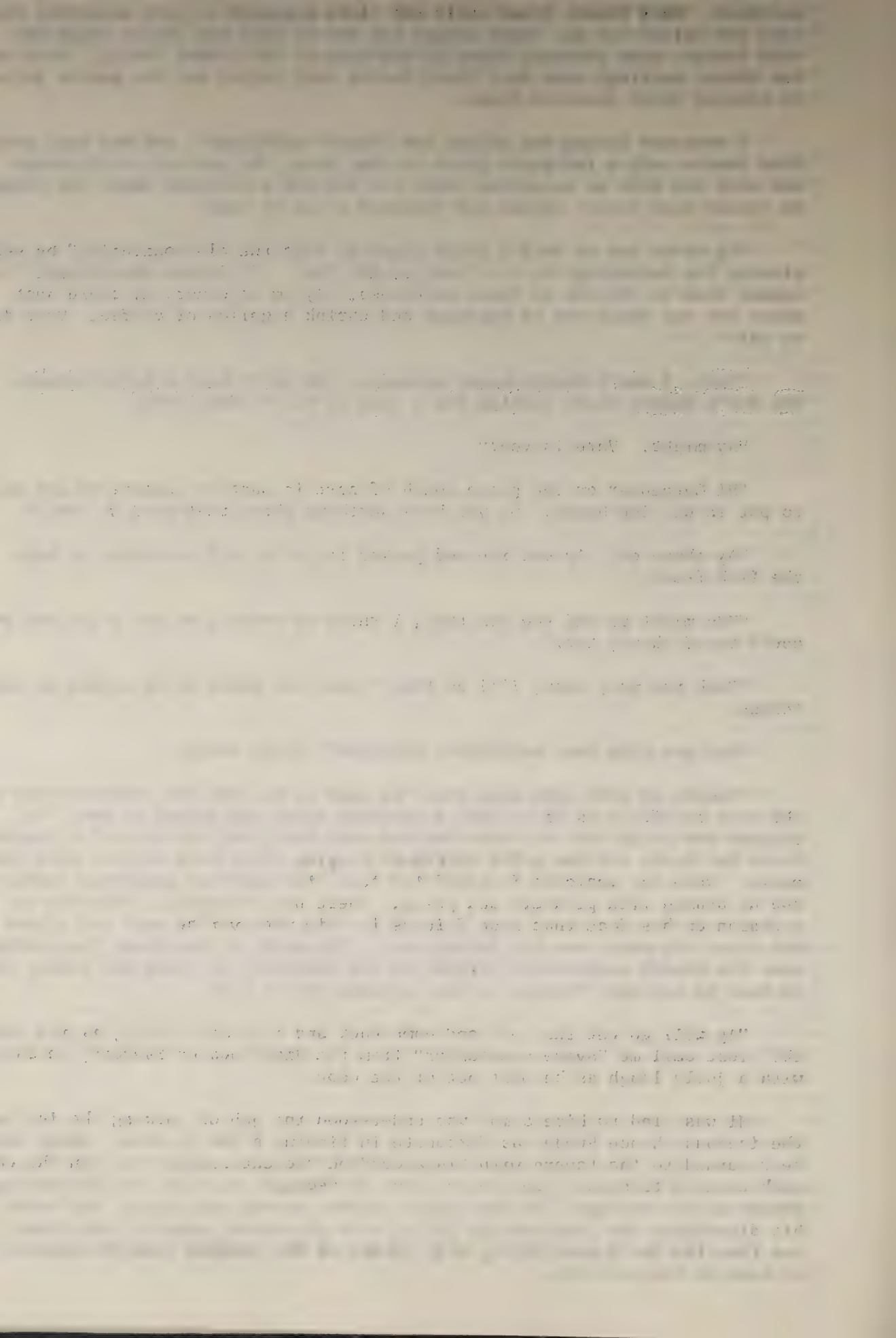
"Tank you very much, I'll do that," said the Swede as he picked up his things.

"Can you play that accordian, stranger?" Orvis asked.

"Humph, ay will just show you," he said as he took the accordion out of the case carefully as if it were a precious thing and indeed it was. He slipped the strap over his shoulder and soon the lively strains of a Swedish Polka had Orvis and the other customers tapping their toes in time with the music. When the musician finished the tune, the audience applauded loudly and he beamed with pleasure and pride. There was a cheerful, likeable expression on his face that made friends for him wherever he went and anyone who liked his music was his friend alos. The smile of happiness that broke over his homely countenance lighted up the features, so round and ruddy, and ke knew he had made friends in this strange little town.

"Ay will go get that yob and come back and play more music, if you like, eh? Yust call me "Svede Highlander" from the Highlands of Sveden", he said with a jolly laugh as he went out of the door.

Hi was glad to hire a man who understood the job of packing the ice in the icehouse hence Swede was fortunate in finding a job so soon. After supper he returned to the tavern with his accordion and entertained the men who came each evening to spend a few hours, thus he became a popular and interesting person in the village. He was a good worker, strong and sturdy, and under his directions the icehouse was filled with glistening cakes of the clean ice from the Des Moines Riber, well packed in the sawdust from the sawmill to keep it from melting.



As soon as Swede learned that Clara had a melodeon, he went there to visit one evening and the two music lovers played for each other; Swede quickly learned many of the songs she played and the tones of the two instruments blended in beautiful music thereafter at frequent intervals.

Dick Stuart liked the music but he liked better to get Swede started telling stories about the old country and his experiences on the fishing boats. The stories seemed to carry him back to the days when he went out with a crew of fishermen and dragged in the nets filled with fish. The waves dashed high on stormy days and many times they were in danger of being overturned as the boat dipped and rose on the high waves. Dick imagined he too, could smell the salty tang of the ocean spray and the strong odor of fish that clung to the boat. When the day's work was finished, there was milk and hardtack for lunch, with sometimes, bread made from hay, finely ground into meal. Dick loved the stories and asked countless questions but Swede never tired of telling him about his native country whose associations grew more precious in retrospect.

There continued to be a keen interest in the promise of the lands of the golden west. John and Eliza McKinney liked to listen to accounts of the west and Frank Hook was a good story teller who described the country in detail to them; the wide sweeping prairie where the buffalo roamed at will and where longhorn cattle might graze on the abundant grass and grow fat.

John and Eliza were young and they thought they might as well go now while they would enjoy it more, so they sold their share of the stock, except four cows to Wes, bought a good covered wagon and preapred to start. They loaded their household goods into the wagon, yoked the cows to the tongue and started out on a mild September day on this long trip that would take several weeks to complete, for cows traveled slowly.

John and Eliza represented a great army of people, a familiar part of the picture in this epochal time of log cabins, fireplaces, axes, guns, sorghum and cornbread, and all the customs of the early settlers. Eliza's sunbonnet that protected her face from the wind and sun, her gingharm dress and John's overalls and shirt of plain, rough fabric, were as familiar as the gun that reposed close to John's hand as they rode along.

He would use the gun to shoot a turkey to roast for their supper or to kill a rattlesnake that reared its menacing head along the trail. Their journey across the lonely spaces with no living soul. within many miles and across treacherous streams would be fraught with danger and possibly discomfort, but always there would be the promise of the west and the pleasure of finally reaching their destination.

Hook's Point had long felt the need of a hotel so Will and Laura Everhart, Mandy's brother, bought from Wes, the house John McKinneys had lived in and moved it to town. He bought a lot from Mandy on the east side of the street south of Robert's store, put the size, "HOTEL" on a pole, and within a week was ready for business. Along the south wall he made a long counter with stools where lunches and drinks were served; two tables with chairs were placed along the north side of the room. All the cooking and baking was done in the back of the room.

While this was going on, Tenycke returned to his home in New York that fall and left his business in the experienced hands of Hi Carpenter once more. They had harvested good crops; the oats and whaat fields were plowed in the fall to be planted to corn in the spring. Hi bought eggs from the farmers and pickled them while the price was low, then later in the winter when the

supply was limited and the price high, sold them to the stores in Boone along with the butter and cheese Digert made. At this time of year, milking was the chief occupation and dozens of pails of milk were poured into the large vats each night and morning, requiring the help of several of the other men to take care of it. The cows were sleek and fat, well fed on the grain and fodder, and protected from the cold weather in the large barn. Calves thrived on the skim milk and hogs grew fat on a ration of milk, water and corn.

The farm continued to be a source of pleasure and interest to the entire community and the hired men were a jolly, friendly lot. Almost every night they came to town where the hotel, store and saloon echoed the sounds of their voices in conversation over their beer mugs and card games. Rough of manner and sometimes of speech though they were, yet there was an attractive quality in their nature that found a ready response in the business men, farmers and other workmen who joined in the fun.

Swede became the most popular person in town playing his accordion and singing his Swedish songs. His music seemed to weave a spell that soothed the most taciturn or argumentative drinker into less quarrelsome moods and created a more pleasant, serene atmosphere that was greatly appreciated. Although there were laws and courts to protect the individual and right any wrongs, men still took the law into their own hands and would fight for a principle or a real or fancied wrong without a moment's hesitation. Barroom brawls were common and never taken seriously yet they did not add to the pleasure or success of a bartender's business so Orvis welcomed Swede for the good that his music did for his business and the discipline of his customers. Swede being no different than the other men of those days, enjoyed his drinks too and Orvis was generous.

Sarah Hook had left her employment and come home in January to try to regain the health that seemed to be slipping away from her. Dr. Stuart came to see her and after a careful examination found that she was afflicted with the dreaded and common disease of the pioneers, consumption. Although she had never enjoyed the robust health and vitality of Hannah, she had always appeared well, and her gentle, quiet manners were a natural expression of her modest disposition. She refused to submit to the tired feeling that seemed to increase each day and when she did give up and go home for rest, the disease had a firm hold on her that she was then too weak to overcome.

There was nothing in the doctor's power or experience to help her and she gradually grew weaker and thinner as the days passed. Mandy's heart ached as she realized again that she would soon have to part with another loved one; it seemed to her that her heart would surely break when on a cold, dark morning the eighth of February, 1864, Sarah went into the last long sleep that knows no sorrow, no suffering or disappointment. She was buried in the lot beside her father and again Mandy had to go on with her duties of caring for Will, Elizabeth and Finch with a heavy heart.

Chapter Ten

The Sugar Camp

Dick Stuart came hurrying into the house one evening late in March, with his pail of milk in great danger of being spilled in his rush and excitement. His cheeks were rosy from the chilly air and his eyes sparkled with his joyous news.

"Sap's a runnin', mother!" he shouted gaily setting the pail on the floor with a flourish that caused only a little of it to spill over the side.

"You don't mean it Dick," declared his mother as she stopped to look at him in surprise and forgot to tell him not to throw a full pail of milk around so carelessly.

"Sure, I do," he said enjoying the sensation he was creating in his family. "When I was down in the pasture after the cows I noticed the side of a maple tree was all wet where a piece of the bark was broken off. I cut a small hole with my knife and how the juice did run."

His excitement was soon transferred to the others in the family because tending the sugar camp, though hard work, was one of the jolliest and most enjoyable times of the year.

"Really Dick," said his mother, "it seems too early but this mild weather probably means an early spring. We'll have to get busy and get everything ready."

"I cut some elderberry sticks that we can use to make the spiles," he said, dumping them on the table, boy-fashion. "See, a whole lot of them."

"Looks like you brought plenty," said Dr. Stuart. "How soon will supper be ready, Mother?"

"Just as soon as I strain this milk and set the table. Minnie, see if the cornbread is done and take those baked potatoes out of the hot ashes."

"We'll have time to sharpen our knives then before supper, Dick and we can make the spiles while the girls wash the dishes," said the doctor.

Conversation during supper was keen and animated as the family made plans for the sugar camp. The sweet, delicious maple syrup was one of the grandest treats known to the pioneers, coming as it did in early spring when appetites were a trifle jaded from the plain fare that had made up their meals for some time and it was a welcome change from the sorghum and brown sugar they had been using almost entirely while the war was in progress. Served on hot, flaky biscuits it was a favorite breakfast.

After supper Dick and his father cut the spiles from elderberry sticks which were about an inch in diameter and eight inches long. The top half was split off for about four inches of the length and hollowed out to make a trough, then a hole was bored through the other end so the sap could run through it along the trough to be caught in pails or other containers.

Mary and the girls washed the dishes, then carried in the large iron kettle that was used to heat the water at butchering time; they scoured it to shining cleanliness and found the large wooden spoon they always used to stir the syrup. There would have been time on the morrow to do this but it was a pleasure they could see no reason for postponing and they always enjoyed things more when all the members of the family worked and planned together. Little Ed toddled around getting in every one's way, scattering the shavings from the spiles and sharing the excitement that seemed to have taken possession of his family. Although it was something he did not understand he knew it was something very wonderful judging from the actions of everybody else.

The next morning Dick and his father took a brace and bit, the spiles and every available container and went down to the place at the bottom of the hill where the sugar maples grew. They worked steadily, boring the holes in the trees, placing the spiles firmly in the holes and arranging the containers. The sap was flowing freely and their eyes glowed with anticipation.

They gathered the fluid in large pails the next morning and started cooking it down into syrup. Dick stayed out of school to help carry the sweet water to the camp, gather wood for the fire, and cut the large sticks into smaller ones with his axe. The large, black iron kettle was suspended from forked sticks over the fire that burned brightly beneath it. Dr. Stuart stirred and watched the syrup carefully when it began to thicken, but this occurred only after several hours since it required 12 quarts of sugar water to make a glass of syrup. Some of it was cooked longer and stirred constantly which caused the formation of sugar granules and this thick mass when poured into small containers became little cakes of maple sugar when it was cooled.

As Dr. Stuart finished cooking each day's quantity of syrup, he always left some of it in the bottom of the kettle, then going to the bank of the creek he carefully pulled the leaves off the ice that still clung to the bank of the stream, for the late March sun was not yet warm enough to melt the ice and snow in the secluded curves of the creek. The ice was smooth and clean and as the doctor poured the warm syrup on it the children, dashing down to this enchanted spot after school, picked up a handful of the hardened sugar candy to eat on the way home.

On Sunday a strong Chinook wind warmed the chill air and the sun shone warm and pleasant on the sugar camp. After dinner Mary and the children went down there to watch the doctor work. They were joined by several of the neighbors who had heard that "Doc" was cooking syrup and they enjoyed visiting the camp and spending a few hours out in the fresh air of the woods.

John Ballards, Wes and Will Hook and their families, Mandy and her children, Hannah and Bill Ervin, Wes McKinneys and several of the men from the Tenyke farm, include Swede Hilander with his accordion, formed a merry gathering in the timber where the gay laughter of the children was answered by the saucy chirping of birds in the naked branches of the trees.

When Swede picked up his accordian to play music for the crowd a robin perched on a nearby limb and scolded noisily at this strange creature who made such unusual noises and went through such queer motions to do it. The children cheered the brave little bird who seemed to be alone so far from the warm, sunny south and whose bright feathers and sweet song was such a welcome harbinger of spring.

After Swede had finished playing and singing several tunes, Clara Stuart led the group in singing many of the old favorite songs. Doctor Stuart kept time to the music with his wooden spoon and chimed in on the chorus in his deep rumbling bass voice, as they changed from one rollicking tune to another finally ending with a hymn that expressed the faith that never wavered during the years that had passed wearily, since the war clouds had cast their sinister shadows over the future and through which no sunshine of hope had yet penetrated. John Will Hook and Cash Corey were still somewhere in the east but no word had come through from them for many months and the people consoled themselves with the old saying, "No news is good news" while they waited for something definite.

This somber mood held the crowd for only a moment then their naturally optimistic dispositions took hold of them and they were cheerful again out in the woods with nature and God where troubled hearts are soothed and hope easily gains the ascendancy over defeat. As the sun began to sink below the trees on the western hillsides, the people left the sugar camp and returned to their homes while Dr. Stuart poured the syrup in the pails and accompanied his family to their home. When the "sugar camp" season was over the Stuart family was well supplied with maple sugar and syrup for many weeks to come. The old black kettle was returned to its place in the woodshed until the next season of its usefulness arrived.

A new industry made its appearance in 1864 that instantly appealed to the farmers. Since all farms on an average were small, no one could raise many hogs or cattle because it would require more grain than could be produced to feed them through the winter or prepare them for market. Only a farmer operating on a large scale could go into the stock business extensively.

Up to this time, very few sheep had been raised in the country and people were unfamiliar with them as a business venture. However, those who had raised sheep seemed to have good luck and the price of wool was high, so all at once everybody decided sheep would be a good investment. They were easy to raise and feed and with so much prairie and timber land covered with abundant grass, the feed problem was easily solved. All who could scrape up a few dollars immediately bought a flock of sheep and a new enterprise was launched, one that for once presented a possibility of easy money.

Tenycke, in accordance with his big scale production plan, sent orders to Hi Carpenter that he should send several of his men to Des Moines to drive back a flock of 2000 sheep and that he should build a corral for them at once. Four men started out on horseback in April and four days later returned with the sheep. In the meantime, Hi hired extra men to help build the corral, or fence around a ten acre plot of ground east of the sawmill and cattle barns. It was eight feet high with strong white oak posts set solidly in the ground at intervals of eight feet, with slender poles fastened to these in horizontal position by making holes through the posts and sliding the poles through them.

The sheep were driven into the corral at night to protect them from the wolves that still continued to be a menace and were a special terror to the sheep men. None of the hired men regarded the new business with any enthusiasm so they drew straws to decide who should have the job of herding the sheep during the day. Dave Hook, who had been working there that spring, drew the job, but he did not dislike it so much for, being a quiet, dreamy sort of young man, he found that the work suited him very well.

The lambs began arriving in a few days and Dave was busy keeping them with the flock for they were easily lost in the tall grass and he often had to walk many miles a day, in his efforts to keep the flock together as it wandered along. Dave had a large Collie dog, named King, which was trained to help drive the sheep saving Dave many steps. When he yelled, "King", and pointed in the direction of the stragglers, the dog was off like a golden brown flash to round up the sheep.

As the lambs grew and learned to follow the ewes, the shepherd found that he had little to do because King easily kept the sheep together with few commands from his master. The days were long and pleasant and Dave was safe in taking a short nap in the afternoon, secure in the knowledge that his faithful dog would watch the sheep. He spent hours playing his harmonica; the sweet, plaintive notes of the music wafting away on the breeze to the ears of the farmers who paused in their work to listen and enjoy the peaceful, serene atmosphere of this pastoral scene.

When the sun began its descent in the west, Dave and King slowly drove the sheep homeward and into the corral where they would be safe through the night.

Between busy seasons, the men on the farm constructed a large sheep shed for a winter shelter; other farmers built small ones for their small flocks and planned to increase them the next year.

The war continued to be a very real and disturbing affair but it had been going on for three years now, and the people had accepted it as a matter of course. Why dwell on anything they were powerless to change or influence? There was no use in sinking down in the slough of despondence and staying there, it was better to be cheerful and find as much pleasure in life as possible because there was a possibility that it might grow worse instead of better. So the settlers planned a great celebration for the fourth of July.

Early in the spring Frank Hook had bought a steam engine and sawmill and started a business of his own; setting it up in the timber back of his house. Here, within a few rods of the sawmill were huge sawlogs and Frank was busy most of the time. For some time he had been working on something else that was a complete mystery to everyone, only his own family knowing exactly what he was trying to do. Ike and Ella were importantly secretive about it, and told other inquisitive children they would learn what it was on the Fourth of July, which added greater fascination to the mystery.

Frank and the business men of the town advertised a great celebration to be held in the shady piece of woodland north of town. Frank built a large bowery for dancing, covering it with limbs and bushes and the floor was made of wide, smooth boards from his sawmill and rested on a foundation of logs about a foot in diameter.

The morning of the Fourth was clear and warm; people from miles around began arriving early in the forenoon in lumber wagons and buggies with well filled boxes of food for their dinner. They were surprised at the elegant program of entertainment that had been arranged for them. The most amazing thing was the strange contraption that Frank had been working on; now that it was finished it turned out to be a merry-go-around. The children thought it was quite the most wonderful thing they had ever seen.

It had four seats wide enough for two children to sit in comfortably. They were set on a circular frame which revolved around a center pole from

The first thing I noticed when I stepped out of the car was the cold. It was a sharp, biting cold that seemed to penetrate my coat. I shivered as I walked towards the entrance of the building. The air was thick with the scent of old wood and the faint, distant sound of a clock tower.

I had heard that the building was old, but I didn't realize how old. The walls were made of dark, polished wood that had been here for centuries. The floors were made of the same material, and the ceiling was a complex network of beams and supports. The air was warm and smelled of old wood and the faint, distant sound of a clock tower.

As I walked through the corridors, I noticed that the walls were covered in paintings. Some were of people, some were of landscapes, and some were of abstract designs. The paintings were old and the colors were faded, but they were still beautiful. The air was warm and smelled of old wood and the faint, distant sound of a clock tower.

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which guy ropes extended to each seat. These ropes were fastened in a swivel at the top of the pole about ten feet from the ground and when two men pushed on the seats they moved around easily. Frank hired men for this work, paying them 50 cents an hour for their services and several good men were worn out before the day was over. Rides cost a nickel and the merry-go-round carried eight passengers every time it started; it was a tremendous success and Frank was well paid for the hours of labor he had put into it.

While the crowd was moving around over the picnic grounds they were surprised and amused to see a queer parade emerge from behind Frank's barn and move slowly along out to the road and down the street of the town. First there was a savage looking Indian riding a horse, sitting erect and solemn, the bright feathers of his headdress making a blazing mass of color above the smear of war paint that covered his face. He was followed by two yoke of oxen, hitched to a hayrack in which several men were riding, dressed in a variety of fancy and comical costumes; negroes, ghosts, soldiers, hoboes, woodcutters and musicians.

The parade continued through town, down to the Tenycke farm turning there and coming slowly back, then it stopped and entertained the crowd that applauded wildy. As the musicians struck up the music it was easy to identify each one; Frank played his violin, Swede his accordion and Dave Hook his harmonica. The negroes jigged to the toe-tingling tunes as the men changed from one to another.

After 15 minutes of this entertainment, the parade returned to its starting place, the participants returned to the crowd and the other features of the day went on as scheduled.

There were foot races for the boys, young men and older men, then target shooting for the more expert marksman. A wood chopping contest was of special interest and attracted a curious audience. Every man there could swing an axe with the greatest ease and accuracy, and enjoyed showing his ability. Groups of six men took part in the preliminary contests and the one who cut through a log 16 inches in diameter first, won.

Six of these contests were conducted and the six winners engaged in a final race for the honor of champion wood chopper. Wes McKinney, Dr. Stuart, Will Everhart, Lyman Roberts, Ike Hanley and Hi Carpenter chopped furiously when they were given the signal to start. The crowd had put their bets on Wes from the first and just before the signal he moistened his hands, grabbed the axe handle in a solid grip, spat a mouthfull of tobacco juice, wiped his mouth on his shirt sleeve, and got in the first lick. Chips flew amid the wild shouting of the crowd as they urged the contestants on to greater speed. A large gap appeared in the logs and in an incredibly short time Wes landed a hard blow that cut his log in two and he was the winner.

At noon the families gathered under the shade trees and spread their dinner on red and blue checked tablecloths. Friends and relatives ate together, enjoying the hot coffee that Will Everhart served free as an advertising scheme as well as making it his contribution toward making the day more pleasant for the people.

The afternoon was spent in playing a new game called "Baseball" that had originated recently and in which the men took a lively interest. Few of them had played before but they were anxious to learn and showed a surprising talent for the game. Swinging a bat trying to hit a ball was not so different from trying to hit the same spot in a log with an axe.

Frank had also advertised a big dance to be held that night on his bowery so most of the farmers left for home about four o'clock to do their chores in time to come back again. Those who lived very far away stayed, declaring theirs would have to wait until they got home.

The moon came up and shone brightly, lighting up the bowery nicely. No means of artificial light were available out of doors and the harvest moon seemed to have been meant for just such an occasion. Frank played his violin for the square dances, waltzes, polkas and two-steps. The floor was crowded every time, a ticket for a couple for the evening cost 50 cents, so the people thought they got their money's worth. Not only the young folks but older ones as well danced with a joyous appreciation of the graceful movements of the different dances as they moved with the rhythm of the music.

The gay celebration continued until midnight when the music stopped, then horses were hitched to lumber wagons and buggies, and the people started for home. Many of the smaller children had long since given up the fun, for they were worn out and sound asleep in the wagon boxes on blankets and comforts spread on a layer of straw provided for this purpose by thoughtful mothers. The people had not enjoyed themselves as much for many years, having pushed their cares and worries away for a day, and given themselves completely to the business of having a good time.

During the summer the men were busy with their usual work but they had a day now and then that held no particular job; at these times those who lived near town walked in and spent a few hours in the stores and tavern. They entertained themselves in a variety of ways and enjoyed most of all pulling a "square draft."

Frank Hook had a team of mules and one of them was a tough old creature that was a demon to pull. One day there were about 20 men in town when someone suggested that they get the mule and pull a square draft. Ike and Finch were in the crowd so they went sent to get the mule. The men hitched him to a strong pole and a dozen others grasped it firmly while another tried to make the mule pull hard enough to drag the men and pole along.

At first the mule had the best of the men pulling them a short distance but the men took another grip on the pole, set their feet and held on. Gradually they began to pull the mule back and after considerable hard work and sweating finally won the tug-of-war. They were wiping the perspiration from their flushed faces and talking over their recent exhibition of strength, when Jim Lane came along with his axe over his shoulder on his way home from the timber where he had been cutting sawlogs for Frank Hook.

Bill Orvis was standing in front of his tavern watching the fun, and Jim spoke to the group then said, "set 'em up, Orv". No second invitation was needed, the men quickly marched into the barroom and lined up at the bar. It did not take long for them to drink up a keg of beer but when they were through they decided it was time to go home for dinner so looked around for Jim to pay the bill. But he was nowhere to be seen, he had gone on to his home, a log house north of the schoolhouse. The crowd realized they were the victims of another of his good natured jokes, so they had to dig down in their pockets and pay for their own drinks. They resolved to get even with Jim and no doubt Jim was expecting it sometime.

Another winter came and slowly dragged along while the dreary years of the war began to have a more depressing effect on the people. Crops had been fairly good but the farmers had little surplus to sell to get any money and

everything they must buy was high priced and more scarce than ever. Corn-bread and sorghum was on the table every day and many people were glad to get it. One lady whose husband had enlisted in the army and left her with two children to feed and clothe, traded her wedding dress for two pans of lard. When the children asked for a lump of sugar she was tempted to slap them because they knew she could not give it to them; her inability to provide them with even the necessities sometimes turned her despair into anger. But even children realized how serious the situation was and did not complain.

Although they did not have all the food they needed they were compensated to some extent by plenty of warm clothing. With all the sheep in the country there was plenty of wool and the spinning wheels hummed and sang in the pioneer's cabin. When the sheep were sheared in May, the women took large quantities of the wool, picked out all the burrs, washed and cleaned it of all foreign substances, then stored it away until winter time.

During the long winter evenings they carded the wool, combing the long fibers into strands in preparation for spinning into yarn. Seated by the warm fireplace in the bright glow of the crackling fire, the mother spun the wool into yarn, the hum of the spinning wheel making a soft song that mingled cosily with the voices of the family as they sat together in the evening eating popcorn, reading, writing or studying the reddish, yellow light of the kerosene lamp by the flickering light of a tallow candle.

The girls of the family learned how to knit and from the yarn, ample pairs of stockings, mittens, mufflers and what not took form and guaranteed comfort in all kinds of weather.

They made comfort tops from old clothing and with the warm wool for a filler the winter winds could blow and the snow pile high outside but the pioneer family snuggled down between the warm quilts and comforts on the high straw or cornshuck ticks on the bed and drifted off to dreamland, secure and warm and comfortable.

The war had dragged on so long that the people felt as if they were at a standstill, the past was indistinct and the future was an impenetrable fog with nothing certain or firm by which they could chart their course in the future. They were like a sailor adrift in a dead calm, where there could be no progress until a favorable wind started his craft on its voyage again.

They were beginning another year with the same dogged determination to keep going a little while longer when, like the sunshine after the storm, the open prairie after a wilderness journey, the news came across the country that the war was over. Lee had surrendered, the slaves were free, and the boys were coming home.

A prayer meeting was held at the home of Dr. Stuart the same evening that the news reached Hook's Point and it was the most devoutly sincere meeting in the history of the community. Everyone who had ever professed any religion was there and many others made their first appearance, because beyond any doubt, there is no one ever though he may not realize it himself, who does not have some belief, conviction or faith within his heart that is his salvation and his anchor in time of stress. Every prayer was a paean of Thanksgiving and an expression of faith, a rededication of their lives to the future of their country. At the close of the service they sang Julia Ward Howe's new song; they felt indeed that their eyes "had seen the glory of the coming of the Lord" of peace.

Long after the meeting ended, the crowd lingered to talk, the human characteristic of people to cling together and share their happiness as well as their sorrow.

But the community scarcely had time to realize the great importance of the end of the war or to think about reconstruction, when they were stunned by news that President Lincoln had been assassinated. Dr. Stuart had been a subscriber of the New York Herald for many years and when it came the complete details of the crime were learned.

The paper announced in a long list of head lines the astounding details of the tragedy and was ready by dozens of people.

THE NEW YORK HERALD

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, APRIL 15,
1865

IMPORTANT

Assassination
of
President Lincoln.

- - - -

The President Shot at The
Theatre Last Evening

- - - -

Secretary Seward Dagged in
His Bed but Not Mortally
Wounded

- - - -

Clarence and Frederick Seward
Badly Hurt

- - - -

ESCAPE OF THE ASSASSINS

- - - -

J. Wilkes Booth, the Actor the Alleged
Assassin of the President.

War Department
Washington, April 15, 1:30 A.M.

This evening at about 9:30 p.m., at Ford's Theatre, the President, while sitting in his private box with Mrs. Lincoln, and Mrs. Harris Rathburn was shot by an assassin, who suddenly entered the box and approached behind the President.

The assassin then leaped upon the stage, brandishing a large dagger or knife, and made his escape in the rear of the theatre.

The pistol ball entered the back of the President's head and penetrated nearly through the head. The wound is mortal.

The President has been insensible ever since and is now dying.

It is not probably that the President will live through the night.

General Grant and wife were advertised to be at the theatre this evening, but he started to Burlington at 6 o'clock this evening.

At a Cabinet meeting, at which General Grant was present, the subject of the state of the country and the prospect of a speedy peace was discussed. The President was very cheerful and hopeful, and spoke very kindly of General Lee and others of the Confederacy, and of the establishment of a government in Virginia.

Washington, April 15, 5:00 a.m.

The President continues insensible and sinking.

It is now ascertained, with reasonable certainty, that two assassins were engaged in the horrible crime, Wilkes Booth being the one that shot the President, and the other an accomplice, whose name is not known, but whose description is so clear that he can hardly escape.

It appears from papers found in Booth's trunk that the murder was planned before the 4th of March, but fell through then, because the accomplice backed out until "Richmond could be heard from."

Booth and his accomplice were at the livery stable at 6 o'clock last evening and left here with their horses at 10 o'clock, or shortly before that hour.

It would appear that they had, for several days, been seeking their chance, but for some unknown reason, it was not carried into effect until last night.

One of the assassins has evidently made his way to Baltimore; the other has not yet been traced.

The President Dead

Washington, April 15, 7:30 A.M.

Abraham Lincoln died this morning at 22 minutes past seven o'clock.

The governor issued a proclamation requesting all the people to meet at their respective places of worship for prayer, and also asked that all business and transportation be suspended for the day of April 27. The populace responded wholeheartedly and offered their prayers. They were truly sad over the death of this great man whose life had been as hard and his struggle even greater than their own.

Gradually the horror of it faded away and the community went about its own affairs, preparing a grand welcome for John and Cash who arrived in June. A big picnic was held at the home of Will Hook and John's wife, Caroline, was the happiest young woman in the world. After an absence of four years they could hardly believe the war was really over and they were together again. It was a strange impossible dream, which they were anxious to forget.

The boys were reluctant to talk in detail of their experiences and the people, understanding their reticence, responded and instead told them all the news of home and the things that had happened during their absence, which was like music to their ears. The beaming faces of their friends, the familiar scenes, the release from anxiety and fear, filled them with a great peace of mind, and they prepared to settle into civilian life again.

Chapter Eleven

Hook's Point Expands

The end of the war brought great changes to Hook's Point and it immediately expanded with more buildings and citizens. The spirits and ambition of the people rose to new heights now that the future presented a firmer foundation on which to build. They found greater pleasure and desire to plan and work since the heavy burden of anxiety and suspense was lifted from their shoulders. The stage coach was loaded with passengers each time it came from the south and covered wagons bulging with household goods, followed by the usual small herd of cattle, became a common sight, while a new eagerness was manifest in the family groups that rode in the wagons.

The fine farm land lying around Hook's Point attracted the home seekers and many of them stayed in the community. Hi Carpenter had been doing very well as overseer on the Tenycke farm but he realized he was at a standstill so far as any personal financial advancement was concerned. He made a good living but as is the case with most jobs he found it impossible to lay up very much money. People were buying up the land and the demand was sure to raise the price before long so, using his shrewd business judgment, he decided that now was the time to buy a place and make a start for himself. Consequently, he wrote informing Tenycke that he intended to resign and bought a farm north of Hook's Point, making a down payment on it and giving a note for the rest.

Digert also gave up his job as cheesemaker and dairy man and started farming on a place east of Hook's Point owned by Fullerton, his brother-in-law. B. C. Dickson and Hi's brother, Erastus, came with their wives who were sisters, from New York and took over the job of operating the Tenycke farm. Brainerd Hakes and his sister, Celestia, also came from the eastern city to work on the farm; he assisted in the dairy and she helped Mrs. Dickson.

Hi Carpenter hired Charlie Jones, the carpenter who had superintended the construction of the Tenycke buildings, and they built a three-room house and a small barn on Hi's place, all he could afford at the time. Tenycke showed his appreciation for the fine work Hi had done for him by giving Hi a team of horses, a yoke of oxen and a cow as a bonus.

Dr. George Paul, an army doctor, brought his family here and started a drug business, building a two-story house on the side of the hill south of Mandy's place where he first excavated part of the slope to make a level place to build. He sold some whisky and beer as a sideline and ran some competition for Bill Orvis who had tired of the saloon business anyhow so he moved away.

The Orvis log house was next occupied by the Gus Newman family. Gus went into the blacksmith business in a small shop he built east of the corner across the road from the Stevens sawmill.

Albert Wick returned from the army and built a two room house south of Robert's store on the east side of the road. He worked by the day to earn a living for his wife Delia, and their two small children. While engaged in the battle of Port Gibson in the campaign to get Vicksburg, he had received a bullet wound in his shoulder that continued to bother him at times and hard manual labor added to his discomfort, so he soon began looking for some easier type of employment.

Wes and Sarah Hook had been operating the stage station profitably at the ford of the river since Isaac had given it up before his death but now that Hook's Point was growing so fast Wes figured he might do better if he moved to town and started up some kind of business there. He had a natural talent for butchering beef and pork and liked the work so he built a house on the west side of the road a short distance north of Frank Hook's place. Then he built a barn in which to do his butchering and increased his herd of hogs as a source of the pork supply. He secured ice from the Tenycke farm to cool the meat and keep it fresh during warm weather. This business met with instant success because a mess of fresh meat was a real treat indeed to the people whose appetite for salt pork lost its zest in hot weather.

The stage station and hotel was then taken over by Mr. and Mrs. Haskell. They raised the house and built a porch on the east side so passengers could alight from the coach, step on the porch and walk into the house without having to walk over the ground that was often muddy. There was room in the large barn for the teams and when the roads were muddy, the tired horses could be exchanged for fresh ones to complete the journey. The Haskells were genial hosts and the passengers enjoyed stopping there for a meal or lunch or to be ferried across the river.

Hook's Point was fast becoming a thriving little town with its hotel, drug store, butcher shop, blacksmith shop, general store and several dwelling houses. But there was one thing lacking and that was a church. The problem was discussed at prayer meetings which had outgrown the homes where they had been held for so many years. The people wished for a place where regular Sunday church services could be held.

Grandpa Cleveland, a sincerely religious elderly man, lived a mile and a half south of town and always attended the prayer meetings and special services when a minister was invited to preach on Sunday. As sentiment grew in favor of trying to provide a building, he went ahead and managed the task very capably. At a special meeting of the people in Hook's Point and the surrounding community held in his home, he suggested that donations be made and work started as soon as possible. The business men donated money and men from the country promised to furnish walnut logs to be sawed at the mill for the lumber. Frank Hook and Stevens donated the sawing and when the lumber and shingles were ready all the men in the community gathered and started the building.

The joists were solid walnut, almost as hard as rock. The trees had been growing for so many years, and had become seasoned, so the lumber was of the best and would last for years. The building was 24 x 40 feet and faced the south. It was constructed well and when finished was a fine building of which the people were very proud. There were also more boys and girls of school age and the old building would hardly accomodate them comfortably so this new building was to be used as a school house and church combined and for any other community affairs. The large glass windows let in the light that would add to the comfort of the pupils as they pored over their books and slates on dark days.

It was a beautiful building and its white paint glistened in the sunshine, a symbol of the ambition and ideals of those stouthearted pioneers who realized the need for spiritual guidance as a regular part of their lives and its softening influence where the hard knocks sometimes made tempers short and feelings hard.

On the first Sunday in September the first church services was held in the new church and the sweet, clear tones of the new bell carried far

out over the country side on this quiet Sabbath day that stirred the hearts of the men and women as they walked into the church with their children and took their places in the new seats that set in neat rows of single and double seats of various sizes for the different ages of pupils who would sit in them through many long hours.

Grandpa Cleveland began his career of singing master that day as he led the congregation in singing songs from the old book called the "Jubilee". He sounded his tuning fork to get the pitch and the voices of the people of all ages raised in joyous accord. Grandpa led in a strong pleasant voice and his sincere religious zeal communicated itself to his audience and they responded with a fervor that thrilled him with its great promise of good thoughts and deeds in the years to come.

School opened the next day and the boys and girls returned with their dinner pails, books and slates. Joe Whitaker, of Boone, was in charge of the school and the pupils were tremendously excited over this first day. They set their tin dinner pails on a shelf provided for this purpose, selected their seats then went outside to play games until the ringing of the bell called them to work.

Late that summer the sheep owners began to experience trouble with their sheep. They became ill and many of them died. None of the men had any knowledge of the ailments of sheep and they could not understand what could be the trouble with them so they sent for a veterinary to diagnose the trouble and correct it. After watching the afflicted sheep and studying them, he finally concluded that the prairie was not suited to the raising of sheep. Most of them had some sort of shelter during the cold weather but they were not good enough and the long season between green grass in the fall and spring, because there was no tame hay to put up for winter use, all combined to break down the constitution of the sheep; while the wet prairie upon which they grazed in the summer gave them foot rot.

It was a severe blow to the owners, and the enterprise they had launched with such enthusiasm and confidence, left them hardly well off as when they started. They sold all that were fit for market, and forgot the whole miserable business as soon as possible.

Interest during the winter centered around the school and church services and singing schools. When the work was done in the fall the older boys and girls, some of them 18 and 19 years old attended the school for a few months, trying to catch up on their neglected education. Joe had a full day every day with pupils of all grades and ages. It was difficult to keep his classes organized but he managed to teach them the fundamentals of learning, reading, writing, arithmetic and spelling. Those who could be spared from home or who were planning to teach school studied geography algebra, grammar, history and physiology. They studied from Monteith McNally's Georgraph, Ray's Arithmetic, Pinioe's Grammar, McGuffy's Spelling Book and McGuffy's Readers.

Slates continued to be used extensively and the students learned to write a fine hand with goose quills and ink. Each new spelling word was learned carefully. The teacher pronounced the word and the student pronounced it after him. He then spelled it by syllables, pronouncing each syllable after spelling it, as: Cinnamon, c-i-n cin, n-a na, m-o-n mon, cinnamon.

Spelling bees were held in the evenings at the school house and they became one of the social events of the community. Grandpa Cleveland con-

ducted his singing schools regularly and these two affairs provided a great deal of pleasure for the young folks. The young man called on his lady friend with his sleek, fast trotting horse, the maid mounted behind him and they were off to the schoolhouse for a gay evening of fun. When the snows of winter made this mode of travel uncomfortable, some of the young fellows would borrow a sled, hook their horses together, to it and amid the jingling of sleigh bells and shouts of laughter and singing of voices a whole group of young folks would be on their way. Of course there was always the possibility of the sled load being dumped in a convenient snowbank, by way of fun.

It was usually at these spelling bees and singing schools that romance budded into life. The pioneers were very strict concerning the manner in which the young people conducted their courting so these affairs were golden opportunities for them to become acquainted and continue the friendship. In this gay manner the winter days passed, full of work and fun for young and old. It required a generous amount of wood to keep the houses warm when the cold winds blew and the men and boys were watchful of the woodpile so no blizzard would catch them without plenty of fuel. The women kept busy with their daily housework and sewing and knitting because few clothes were bought ready made and sewing all the clothes for a large family was a steady task.

The children spent a busy day in school and with other work on weekends. They were taught how to do their work properly and to do it willingly because making a living was not easy even though a person was a good worker. They learned the value of everything because they had to earn it in their childish way. Those who lived near the school were fortunate but others who lived two or three miles away suffered great hardships as they trudged their way along through all kinds of weather.

They dressed as warmly as possible in warm knitted mittens and stockings and heavy coats and caps but few of them had overshoes and the snow worked down in around the tops of their high shoes causing discomfort. Toes and fingers and cheeks were often touched with the frost when they arrived at the school on cold mornings and the sympathetic teacher rubbed hands and feet to restore circulation and warm their little bodies and hearts. But the pioneer spirit of determination and bouyant courage was as deeply rooted in the minds of the boys and girls as in the men and women so they accepted their burdens cheerfully and were thankful for every good thing that came their way knowing that they had the best that was available for them.

Early in the spring of '66 another young couple came to Hook's Point to live. Since Digert had moved from the Tenycke farm the cheese industry had been neglected and Tenycke was anxious to keep every branch of his enterprise operating so he hired Harvey and Louise Wilbur of Casanovia, New York to come out here and work. They had been recently married and both had been working the large cheese and butter factories in the east. Tenycke had known them for a long time and appreciated their ambition and ability but he had to paint a good word picture of his farm out in Iowa before he could convince them that it would be a good opportunity for them. It seemed like the other side of the world to them when he described the long trip across the mountains and the plains and the rivers by train and ferry and stage coach, hundreds of miles from home among total strangers. But his glowing picture of the fertile prairie and rich timber land around Hook's Point and the splendid opportunity of sometime securing a good home for themselves finally convinced them it would be a prosperous venture.

They started out from New York when the last days of April were turning warm and pleasant and they enjoyed every mile of the trip that took several days to bring them to their destination. Men were busy preparing the fields for corn planting the tenth of May when they arrived in the little town and the storekeepers and loafers were on hand to welcome them. They were a handsome couple in their stylish eastern clothes and their friendly manner made friends of the townspeople immediately.

Louise was a black-haired, brown-eyed young woman of medium height with round, rosy cheeks and a quick, brisk manner. She stepped lightly down from the stage looking very lovely in her navy blue traveling dress of taffeta made with a basque waist and full skirt. Harvey was slightly taller than his wife with brown hair and blue eyes. Both had the aristocratic bearing of their English ancestors mixed with the friendly, spontaneous ways of their French forbears.

The Wilburs inquired for the Tenycke farm and Finch Hook, Gus Newman and Eva Stuart, who had come to watch the stage as it drove up offered to walk with them to the farm only a few rods south of the town. The boys insisted on carrying Louise's suitcase and Eva asked to carry her coat and a great friendship was begun that blossomed with the months that the Wilbur's spent there. The children loved the pretty young woman and she enjoyed their childish friendliness and both she and Harvey accepted it gratefully.

When they reached the spacious house where Dickson's and Carpenter's lived Eva introduced all of them and the ladies gave the newcomers a warm welcome and gave them a pleasant room. The children left reluctantly, but the Wilburs made them promise to come and see them often, so they were very happy.

Harvey took charge of the milking assisted by Brainerd Hakes, or Brain as he was commonly called. He insisted on a standard of cleanliness that amazed the men who helped with cleaning the barns and added greatly to their daily chores but Wilbur was a reasonable, intelligent dairyman as they soon found out. The cows were fed carefully and he started sorting out the best cows refusing to bother with those whose production was not up to a certain standard. In a short time he had the work well organized and running smoothly. Tenycke had instructed him to manage it by himself so he did without interference from the two foremen and they were glad to turn that part of the work over to him because they preferred the farm work.

Louise made the cheese in the milk house on the east side of the road where all the milk was taken care of. Only a small part of the milk was used for making cheese and the rest was poured into large tanks. When the cream had raised it was skimmed off, churned into butter and the skim milk fed to the calves and pigs. The first step in the process of making cheese was started at night. Several gallons of milk were placed in a large galvanized vat and left until morning when the cream was skimmed off to be made into butter.

Several more gallons of the morning's milk was poured into this vat while still warm, then the rennet was put in to curd the milk. Rennet was made from the lining of a calf's stomach and was bought in dry pieces. This had to be soaked in water until it became soft and dissolved so it would mix with the milk. Louise put in a certain amount of this according to the amount of milk in the vat. It required about an hour for the curds to form. A tool consisting of two large sharp blades fastened to a wooden handle was then drawn through the solution in every direction to cut the curd

and start it to separating from the whey.

Now all this had to be heated. The galvanized tank was hung in a large wooden tank and hot water was poured in the lower tank and in this manner the curds and whey were warmed to the proper temperature. Louise used a cheese thermometer to test the temperature and when it reached 85 degrees it was warm enough. This test was reliable but Louise was a very particular worker so she used yet another. She would take a sample of the curd and chew it and if it "squeaked" in a particular manner it was ready for the next step.

The vat was then tipped up and the whey drained off as completely as possible, then the curds were placed in a box frame with a cheese cloth bottom which allowed the remainder of the whey to drain away. Next it was salted and colored with annoto, a yellow substance, after which it was ready to be put in the press.

The press was a wooden cylinder about eight inches in diameter and 18 inches high. It was lined with cheese cloth and several inches of this extended beyond each end of the press. The press was set on a board and the extra length of cloth was folded to make a bottom in the press for the cheese. The curds were then placed in the press and the other end folded over the top. A thick wooden lid was placed on the top which just fit the inside of the press. A crank connected with some clamps was then turned slightly to force the whey down through the cheese where it would drain off from the bottom. This was a gradual process and Louise gave the crank a turn occasionally as she went about her other work in the milkhouse washing the milkpails and keeping the building scrupulously clean. As the top was pressed down small pieces of the cheese were squeezed up around the edges and these tid-bits were eagerly sought after by the children.

On Saturdays while school was not in session and often during vacation, the three children came and visited with Louise, Harvey and Brain, begging for the sweet bites of cheese which Louise loved to give them. The cheese was usually ready to be taken out of the press by noon and was then placed on a shelf to cure. Unsalted butter was rubbed on each end of the cheese as it was turned to allow it to dry and cure properly. It was sold in the local stores and hauled to other towns where it brought a good price.

Finch and Gus spent many happy hours in the little town that summer, playing with other children, visiting at each others homes, and with Harvey and Brain. With the constant appetites for which small boys are famous they were always looking for something to eat and were never disappointed. They liked Mandy's doughnuts, warm and golden brown from the smoking hot grease and Mrs. Newman gave them a cup of cream and some Swedish hardtack when they came into her kitchen with a certain wistful look on their faces. The hardtack was strange food to Finch but he thought it was delicious.

Oftentimes they slipped into the barn and drank a cup of the warm, sweet milk from the large tank where the milk was strained, when it was milked by the men on the Tenycke farm. When the milking was finished it was carried up to the milkhouse and poured into the tanks there. Brain was a jolly fellows and liked to tease and play jokes on the other men who helped them milk, as well as on Harvey. Finch and Gus enjoyed hearing them talk and watch them wrestle with each other.

One evening Brain was in an unusually hilarious mood and teased Harvey who didn't happen to be in a responsive frame of mind. They had several fresh cows and Harvey was having a time trying to teach the calves to drink

from a pail. As Brain came along with a pail of milk he stopped and watched the procedure.

"What's the matter? Does the calf want to stick its head in the pail?" he asked.

"Now how else would the doggone thing drink?" asked Harvey in exasperation.

"I just thought you might have the same trouble as another feller from the east who tried to teach a calf to drink from a pail like a person does from a cup. He had a dickens of a time."

"Is that so? Well, you better run along or I'll try teaching you how to keep your nose out of my business when I got my hands full with these little dummies."

"I bet you wouldn't have any better luck than you're having with that calf," taunted the daring joker and waited for an answer.

Harvey went on with his job and when he had finished, he put the pail down and quickly turning, tackled Brain. The two men wrestled down the alleyway of the barn folling and tumbling in goodnatured manner until they reached the milk tank when Harvey grasped Brain in a firm hold and dumped him into the tank where he landed with a great splash.

It happened so quickly it was something of a surprise to both and while Brain was climbing out wondering whether he should get really mad, and Harvey was wondering if he would, the sound of boyish laughter from the haymow settled the matter for them and they laughed too. Finch and Guss had slipped into the barn and were drinking some milk when the argument started and had climbed up into the mow when the men came their way.

"That's the time he fixed you, Brain!" yelled Finch. "You better leave him alone even if you are bigger than he is. You sure are a sight. Just wait till I tell the other fellers about this, you'll never hear the last of it."

"You'd better not tell them or anyone else about it," warned Brain. "If you do I'll throw you in the tank and I'll also tell the boss about you kids coming in here and drinking milk too."

"All right then, we won't tell a soul," Finch promised quickly, but you better go change your clothes. Gee! you look funny with all that foam on your clothes," and the boys giggled again.

"Well, how about it?" asked Harvey. "Have we settled it or not?"

"You win. Anybody your size that can throw me into a tank of milk knows how to feed calves. Shake."

The men shook hands with a grin and Brain went to change clothes and Harvey started dipping the milk out of the tank to feed the other calves since it was rather badly spoiled. True to their promise the boys never told anyone and the four enjoyed their comical secret as the boys continued to visit the barns and talk with the men.

In a log cabin that set back in the timber west of Wes McKinney's house, one of Hook's Point's own families had returned to live. Here in

this quiet, secluded spot Frank and Mary Jane Layton and their two children, Oscar three years old, and Tressie, one and a half years old had moved back again near friends and relatives and familiar scenery. They had given up their farm because Frank found the work entirely too monotonous. He was a dreamer and a scholar and his heart was not in his work, therefore, it was the worst drudgery he had ever encountered as he tried to wrest a living from the soil.

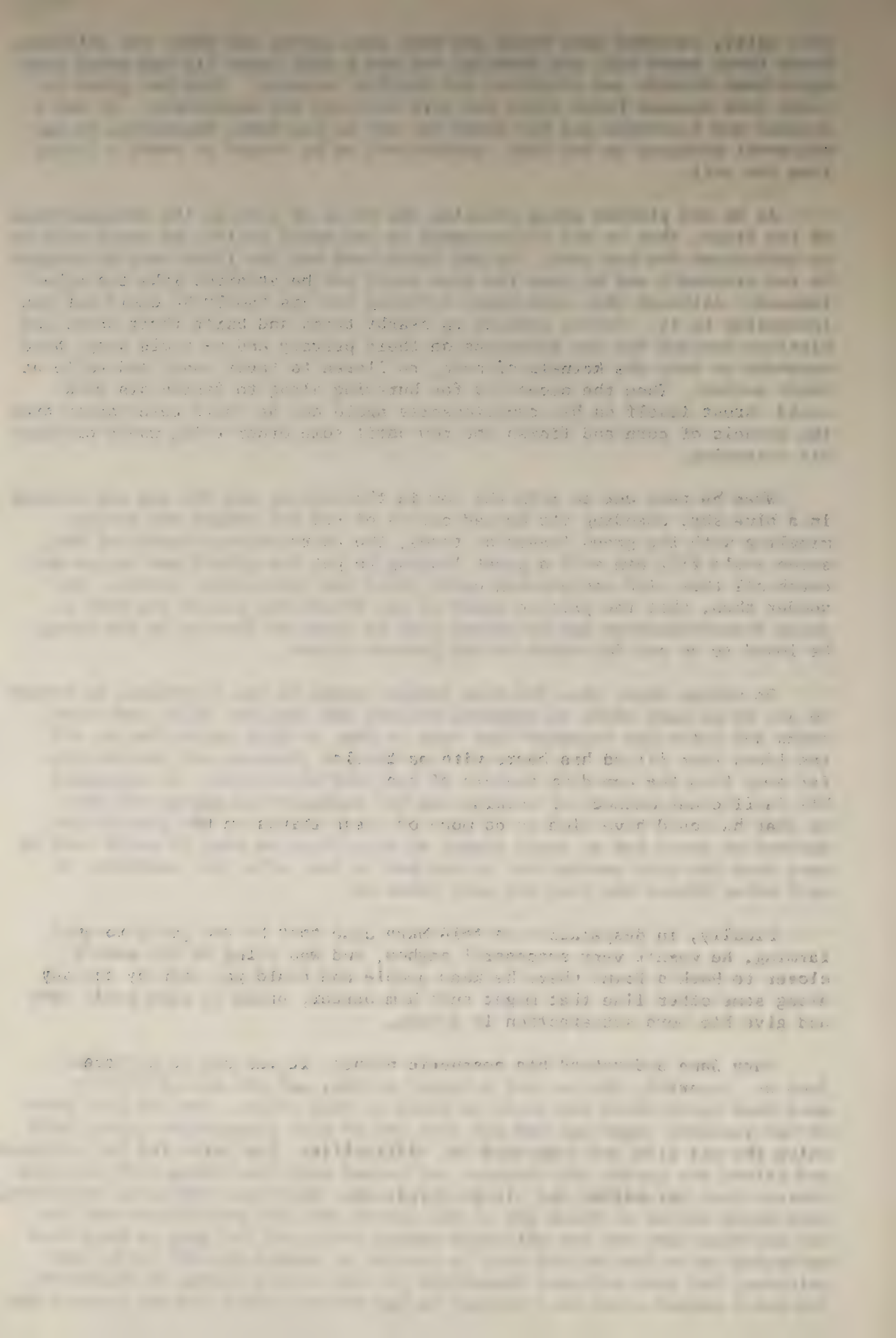
As he had plodded along planting the hills of corn at the intersections of the lines, that he had crisscrossed in the small fields, he could stir up no enthusiasm for his task. He had tried hard but the lines were determined to run crookedly and he knew the rows would not be straight like the other farmers. Although this work meant a living for his family he could not get interested in it. Robins perched in nearby trees and built their nests and bluejays scolded him for intruding on their privacy and he would stop, hand extended to drop the kernels of corn, to listen to their songs and smile at their antics. Then the necessity for hurrying along to finish his work would thrust itself on his consciousness again and he would reluctantly drop the kernels of corn and finish the row until some other thing would distract his attention.

When he went out to milk the cow in the evening and the sun was setting in a blue sky, shedding its myriad colors of red and orange and yellow mingling with the green leaves of trees, the extraordinary beauty of the scene would fill him with a great longing to get his paints and canvas and catch all that rich and glowing color while the inspiration lasted. No wonder then, that the prosaic tasks of his profession filled him with a great dissatisfaction and he wished that he might be free to do the things he loved to do and for which he had greater talent.

On winter days, when the fire burned cozily in the fireplace, he wanted to sit in an easy chair in complete comfort and read his Bible and other books and write the thoughts that came to him, to give expression to all the ideas that filled his hours with particular pleasure and carried him far away from the hum-drum aspects of everyday activities. He regretted his inefficient methods of working and his inability to manage his work so that he could have time to do more of these things in the winter time. Instead he never had an ample supply of wood ahead so that he could take it easy when the cold weather set in but had to keep after the woodpile, so with other chores the time was well taken up.

Finally, in desperation he told Mary Jane that he was going to quit farming, he wasn't very successful anyhow, and was going to try moving closer to Hook's Point where he knew people and could get work by the day along some other line that might suit him better, bring in some ready cash and give him more satisfaction in living.

Mary Jane understood his aesthetic nature, it was not so different from Dr. Stuart's, who was not a farmer either, and she was pleased to move back again where she would be close to home folks. She had lost none of her youthful vigor nor had she lost any of that tempestuous nature with which she met life and conquered its difficulties. She cared for her children and raised her garden and chickens and helped make the living with the same courage that her mother had always displayed. Sometimes the calm, unruffled, easy-going nature of Frank got on her nerves when the provisions were low but she knew that her own whirlwind manner irritated him just as much when he wished to be free to sit lost in thought or took a day off to do some painting, but they adjusted themselves to each others traits of character. His quiet manner acted as a ballast to her stormy nature and she spurred him



on to make a greater success of life than he might have otherwise.

Many of his paintings adorned the walls of his home adding a bit of color to the drab surface which pleased Mary who tried to make her home as attractive as possible. He sold some of his pictures for they made nice gifts and many of them he gave away. He soon worked up a trade as a painter of buildings and was often gone for several days to other towns and out in the country painting buildings, doing carpenter work and any thing else that offered some cash. Mary was alone much of the time during the fall but as winter approached Frank was home most of the time.

On December 4th another son was born to them and they named him Joseph after his grandfather Layton and Willet for his grandmother Layton, whose maiden name had been Willet. Mary Jane was proud of her little family, Oscar a tow-headed little boy, quiet, busy, with little to say as he played and Tressie a dark haired little girl with a mischievous nature and flashing stormy eyes of her mother. She called Oscar, Ot and promptly nick-named the new baby Wid and called herself Tessie.

Frank returned from a trip to the village one day early in January with some great news. He put the groceries on the table and before he hung his wraps on the peg he asked Mary if she wanted to hear all the latest important news from town.

"Of course I do," she said. "You know I've been waiting impatiently for you to come and tell me all you heard in town and how everyone is. Did you see any of the folks?"

"Yes, I stopped at Doc's on the way down. Everyone is all right but your father was pretty tired, was out all night, new baby somewhere out in the country and it was a mighty cold night to be riding a horse in the early morning hours. He thinks a man his age ought to retire or else just work during decent weather."

"Well, as long as he expects to help the stork I think he will have to take the weather as it comes because the stork never pays any attention to it and seems to like bad weather best. He's not so old though, only 52 and spry as a cricket but that isn't any special news. What were you going to tell me?"

"Say, why don't you fry some of this beefsteak I got from Wes Hook, then we could eat and talk at the same time. I'll tell you the latest joke they are telling on Wes and his meat peddling business while you do it."

"I can wait until suppertime for a change from fat pork and so can you. I haven't been off this place since the baby was born, that's five weeks to be exact and I want the news. I do have some hot coffee and some fresh cinnamon rolls and you can tell me the joke while I get it for you."

"If that isn't just like a woman," declared Frank with a serious shake of his head but with a twinkle in his eye that Mary Jane understood. "Here we have been having mush and cornbread steady for a week and you would rather hear the town gossip than eat beefsteak. Well you know how they tease Wes about his slick business deals. If he was really crooked the people wouldn't dare tease him and he knows its all in fun so he laughs with the rest, seems to enjoy it. You know he's been peddling fresh meat around the country, hauls it on a sled and sells any amount people want from a few pounds to a whole hog or a quarter of beef. He can whack off a chunk

while they're asking for it and a small sale is better than none he says."

"Here's your coffee," interrupted Mary, "and you can go the longest way around to tell a story of anybody I ever saw. Now what's the joke?"

Frank stirred the sugar in his coffee took a roll and started eating it then continued.

"These are sure good rolls, Mary, especially with all those raisins in. Why don't you put them in every time or I guess I know the answer to that, something special left from Xmas. Well, a lady wanted eight pounds of pork so he weighed it up on his little scale and says he handed it to her, "Eight times eight is eighty-eight. Take it along for eighty cents lady."

"Aw, he surely didn't cheat her like that, did he?" asked Mary.

"Nope, she caught on so he gave her back some change, but of course he would have told her before he left. He just likes to tease. People who know him expect it and he has got such a habit that he can't resist trying things on everyone."

"All right, we've had the nonsense, now for the news," said Mary.

"It's really news too, will make a great difference around town. Mr. Tenycke has sold his farm."

"He has?" exclaimed Mary. "Who had enough money to buy that big place and why did he sell it?"

"He sold it to Colonel Whitaker of Boone who traded in a hardware store on it. His main reason for selling it was because he must have grown tired of his hobby because he's been making plenty of money except on the sheep business but he probably broke even and that wouldn't bust him anyway. He doesn't care to live out here though 'cause it's a long trip back and forth every year and it is hard to manage things that far from home. Whitaker has been interested in the place for some time and when he made Tenycke a good offer on the farm he just took him up."

"Is Whitaker going to move on it himself and what will all the hired help do?" asked Mary.

"It really starts the ball rolling. Yes, Whitaker is moving in the spring and Dickson and Carpenter are going to build a store on the corner south of the hotel on the east side of the road. Albert Wicks has been elected county clerk of court and so will have his office in the new court house at Webster City. He is a good man for the job and the job will be better for him because his shoulder still bothers him when he does hard work. Dicksons are moving into Wick's house and Carpenters are moving into a log house across the road. Harvey and Louise Wilbur have bought an eighty down in the East Marion vicinity and will move there. Celestia Hakes is going to marry Joe Evans later on but will work for Mrs. Dickson a while longer. And that is about all the plans that have been made yet."

"Well, I think those are plenty for a while, and it will make a good future for all concerned. Roberts will have some competition in his store. What kind of building are they going to put up?"

"They are talking of making it 20 feet wide and 40 feet long with an upstairs room the same size where we might have some dances sometime if we can get some music. I am quite interested in all these changes because I hope to benefit by them. Maybe I can get a job helping build the store and paint it and Dickson plans to add some to Wick's house. That would be close to home so I could come home at night. They are going to start as soon as the weather warms up some, it's too cold now to work with nails and saws and hammers but if our January thaw comes we might get the foundation made. Stevens has plenty of lumber on hand. I'm going to town again in the morning to see what arrangements I can make."

"I do hope you can get some work there, seems like it takes more for living expenses all the time. Hook's Point will be quite a town if it keeps on growing like it has since the war ended. During this last year it has been making up for all the time it lost then. It appears that your idea of moving here was all right and it is so nice to be close to town so we don't feel so isolated from the world especially in the winter time when I have to stay at home so closely. The children are waking up from their nap and they will entertain me from now on I expect. I feel like a new person since you told me all these things, I have something new to think about."

Ot and Tressie climbed onto their father's lap and rummaged through his pockets until they found the candy the storekeeper always included with the groceries. The baby woke up and Mary cared for him and gradually the sun sank in the west, a little later now since the days were growing longer. It glistened on the snow on the ground and the trees, bare and dark, cast long shadows toward the east. The evening came, calm and still, and the pale light of the lamp made a square patch of light on the snow where it shone through the windows. The moon came up in the east and cast its mellow radiance on the countryside and the little town, adding its own cheerful benediction on all those who were happy and hopeful over the new changes that affected their lives and futures and thrilled them with the joy of progress.

Chapter Twelve

Indians!

The January thaw did not materialize, winter continued to hold its icy grip on the countryside with cloudy gray days adding a chilly edge to the cold weather. Everyone waited anxiously for the second day of February hoping it too, would be cloudy when the groundhog would come out of his underground home to take a look at the weather. But the sun came up bright and early, dazzling the sleep-eyed little animal who yawned once, shivered in the unaccustomed cold air and scurried back down to his warm home where he curled up for another six weeks of uninterrupted slumber while the rest of the world went shivering through another six weeks of wind and snow and cold weather. Or so he thought.

The sun continued to shine and the milder temperatures caused the snow to settle, those who had made plans to move the first of March decided to move immediately while they could take advantage of the spell of moderate weather. If it continued for any length of time and the snow melted rapidly, the ponds thus formed would be even worse than snow to travel in.

Albert Wicks and his family moved their household goods to Webster City and Dicksons moved into his house. Carpenters moved into the log house across the road and the Wilburs moved to their property out in the country. Harvey had bought a small house and hired it moved there for them to live in while he made other arrangements after they arrived. Gus Hilander stayed at the Tenycke place while the Whitaker family was moving in and getting settled.

Colonel Whitaker, who had won the title of Colonel in the Mexican War, gained the interest of the community and was a colorful personality from the first. Of medium height, he was broad shouldered, robust in appearance and with such a variety of characteristics that people entertained alternate feelings of awe and friendship for him. His hair was long and black with a few streaks of gray, that swept back from a high forehead and snappy black eyes peered out from beneath shaggy - brows. He was forceful and energetic and ruled his family with an iron hand. The long rambling house was full when he moved all his children there, which at this time numbered seventeen. He had been married twice, his first wife having died leaving a family of nine children, Joe, who was teaching the village school and Jim, Kate, Sally, Nellie, Millie, Charlie, Winnie and Agnes. In due time he had remarried and in this family there were Annie, Maggie, Kenneth, Guy, Bobbin, John, Henry. After the death of the mother, the Colonel married again and Harry and Robert were born.

The Colonel disposed of most of the cows at once because he did not expect to carry on such an immense business as Tenycke had, preferring to engage chiefly in farming. So the cheesemaking was discontinued, the butter making also and no more eggs were pickled. His large family of boys were capable of doing all the farm work and Whitaker managed the business.

In many ways this family resembled those who lived on the large plantations of the south. They had plenty of money and maintained a high standard of living, with the best of food and fine clothes. They were friendly, yet slightly aloof. It was through no feeling of superiority but rather a reserve of manner. The young folks were not allowed to attend public affairs except on rare occasions but they entertained often and lavishly, inviting other young people. The folks in the big house were in reality the aristocrats of Hook's Point and were held in high esteem by the community.

As the weather moderated during March the work on the store was begun and progressed rapidly. The sturdy black walnut joists were securely fastened together, making a solid foundation for the floor. Frank Layton and Frank Hook built it with the help of Dickson and Carpenter and other men who spent a few hours in neighborly fashion. The two-story building on the corner added a new touch of dignity and importance to the town. It was well lighted with large windows in front and back with several smaller ones in the upper story.

A long, smooth counter extended along the north and south walls of the room with wide shelves fastened against the wall to hold groceries and dry goods. The storekeepers stocked up with a great variety of food stuffs, candy, tobacco, dried salt herring as well as the staple commodities. Bolts, of bright red calico, plaid gingham and hair ribbons adorned the dry goods shelves along with the blue denim for overalls, thread, buttons and such uninteresting but very necessary things. A space was reserved for men's and boy's tough, heavy leather shoes, and high, laced shoes for the girls and women. A back corner of the store was stocked with various, necessary articles of hardware such as axes, nails, saws, hammers and a few panes of window glass. A big stove was put up in the center of the room to heat it in cold weather.

So the year of 1867 got off to a good start, crops looked fine, another successful year of school closed and the prayer meetings and singing schools continued under Grandpa Cleveland's leadership. At various times preachers were invited in and church was held. Sometimes Frank Layton preached a sermon for them but he could not be prevailed upon to take up preaching for a regular job. Doran from Boone came up and conducted a good old revival meeting and people for miles around came in their buggies and wagons to hear him preach, some walking several miles.

Ludvig and Olga Lindstrom and their three children, Pete, Annie and Johnny came from across the Des Moines River for the all day services on Sunday. They were strangers to the community but soon became acquainted by means of a comical difficulty they experienced.

They walked from their home to the river where they expected to cross in a row boat, and were provoked to discover that Johnny's pet pig, Betsey had followed him as usual, for every place that Johnny went the pig went too. They tried to chase it in the direction of home but it would not budge from Johnny's side where it rooted and rubbed against his nice new shoes, smearing them badly to the utter despair of Olga. They didn't know what to do with the pig except to go on and leave it so they got into the boat and pushed out from shore into the deep water. To their surprise Betsey plunged into the water and swam along with the boat and reached the other side of the river as soon as they did. Since they had come that far they did not want to give up their trip on account of a pig so they went on, the pig following happily at Johnny's heels.

They arrived a few minutes before ten o'clock, the time at which the services were to begin and the crowd of people standing in the churchyard stared in smiling surprise at the parade that turned in through the gate in the rail fence. Grandpa Cleveland met the family with a cordial greeting and a friendly handshake.

"Welcome strangers. I am glad to see you here to-day. Where are you from?"

"Thank you," replied Ludvig. "Ve come from across da river mit a boat Ve

didn't want to bring da peeg mit, but she come anyway, now vot ve do mit it? It cannot foller Yonny into da church."

There was no doubt about the nationality of these strangers as soon as the others heard Ludvig talk and Newman stepped forward with a big smile.

"So you are a Svede, too," he said. "I am always glad to meet up mit some von from da old country. Ve can take your peeg over to my place until you are ready to go home again. Here, Gus, you go mit Yonny and put him in da pen with your peegs."

Gus came forward with his inseparable companions, Finch and Ike and altogether they went over to Newman's place and put Betsey in the pen behind the blacksmith shop.

When they returned Church was starting and the boys took their places. At noon Newman's invited the Lindstrom's to go home with them for dinner so they could chat about the familiar places they both knew in Sweden and which still occupied a pleasant place in their memory although they were very fond of their adopted land. Many other families had guests that day too and some went to the Everhart hotel for dinner. Services were resumed at two-o'clock and lasted until four when all departed for their homes.

The inhabitants of Hook's Point were enjoying their usual noonday siesta on the ninth day of July when they were rudely and instantly awakened by the piercing blasts of the shrill whistle of the steam engine from the location of Steven's sawmill. Grabbing their hats the men rushed out from stores and houses followed by the women and children to see what was the trouble because something terrible must have happened to make Stevens blow such a fierce whistle. The town was accustomed to a friendly, clear and evenly pitched sound that Stevens always blew at seven, twelve, one and six o'clock on the days when he was operating the mill and by which the community timed their working hours as well. It was never a minute off-time and the teacher could dismiss his pupils and the men come in for dinner by the accuracy of Steven's whistle that carried far out in the country.

The smell of smoke was strong on the air and the men dashed in the direction of the mill where the billows of black smoke were already surging up higher and higher in a frightening and threatening manner. The fire had already gained such headway that there was little the men could do but try to save the mill and steam engine. The only water available was the small amount in the creek that flowed through the ravine and the pails men could carry from nearby wells. Everything was dry and burned fast eating into the great piles of lumber but miraculously missing the mill building itself, and the steam engine was moved away to safety. When the fire had burned itself out the lath and planing machine, the burrs for grinding grists, the machine used in making cheese boxes and 30 thousand feet of valuable lumber was nothing, but a smoking ruin. The loss amounted to several thousand dollars and was a severe blow to Stevens financially, as well as a setback to the community where lumber was always in great demand for building. Much of the lumber belonged to people who had hauled their logs there during the winter and had not had the time to haul it home after Stevens had sawed it.

This was another of the setbacks which the settlers learned to expect and did not daunt their determination. It simply meant starting over again and for every step ahead they had become used to slipping back part of a step in some manner or another. It was like walking in deep snow, plodding along, taking a step ahead and slipping back a short space but nevertheless gaining so much more than was lost that the result was well worth the effort.

The summer passed uneventfully after that experience, oats and wheat were cut, bound into sheaves and threshed out. The stubble was then plowed for corn the next year and new patches broken up. Women tended their gardens and put away food for the winter and the children began to think of school and the end of a glorious vacation.

Colonel Whitaker again excited the interest of the people when he moved the cheese house across to the west side of the road, not far from the house and stated his intention of using it for a horse barn. He expected to buy some fancy driving horses and keep them in this barn as all the farm horses were kept in the big barn across the road. This hobby appealed to every man for good horse flesh was the pride of every one, young and old.

Whitaker went to Des Moines and Fort Dodge and selected eight of the finest horses the settlers had ever seen. Sleek, well muscled, fine boned, the sorrels and blacks and bays had coats like shiny satin. Whitaker took all the care of these horses and that was about all he did do, since the boys were capable of doing all the other work and he expected them to do it.

Several expensive saddles hung on the pegs and fancy light driving harness for single or double driving. In one end of the barn the carriages were housed, a single buggy in which the Colonel and Mrs. Whitaker rode when they went calling in the neighborhood or when they went to Boone to visit old friends for a few days. Everything was of the best and kept in perfect condition. On Sundays the boys went for rides on the horses, the long strides of the racers carrying them over the prairies like the wind. When the boys went calling on their lady friends they hitched a team to the surrey and the girls felt like royalty as they rode in such splendor.

School started again and the pupils reluctantly carried their books and slates to school once more and selected seats. Old seats seemed to cramp them for the summer had seemed to add inches to their growth. The first few days passed monotonously until they became accustomed to sitting at a desk and learning fractions and parts of speech and fine writing. But gradually they became adjusted to the routine and could keep their minds on their work instead of gazing out into the school yard where a faithful dog waited patiently for its master to go home, where birds perched on the rails and coaxed them to come on out and be carefree like them and where cobwebs floated on the summer breeze and the heat waves danced crazily. Anyway, the games and good times at noon and recess more than compensated for the dull hours of study.

There had been little rain during September and the people were amazed when soon after two o'clock one afternoon it suddenly became dark although there had been no clouds in the sky nor any signs of rain. Stopping to see what could have caused such a strange occurrence they noticed there seemed to be a huge cloud of insects filling the air. Gradually they came down and settled on the ground and to their horror they discovered that the insects were the dreaded grasshoppers. Instantly all the stories the people had heard of the disastrous effects of the hoppers in the Dakotas returned to their minds and their hopes sank to the lowest ebb in all the trying times and experiences that had come before. This was a worse threat to their future than heat or cold, fire or flood.

Luckily the hoppers had come too late to do any great damage that fall since the oats and wheat were safely out of the way and the corn was too well matured to be harmed. But it was the threat to the next year's crops that alarmed the farmers. About the only things left for them to eat were the turnips and cabbages in the gardens but where the housewife neglected to get these out of their way they cleaned them up so fast that they fully realized

what would happen to their crops when all the hopper eggs hatched.

The earth was honeycombed with the holes they had bored in the ground and filled with eggs. Some of the holes were two inches deep and completely filled with the white eggs that could spell such destruction for the farmer. It was a dismal winter indeed for the vision of all those eggs hatching out into winged disaster for them could not be forgotten by even the most optimistic person. Any calamity is difficult to face but when it develops suddenly it is not as discouraging as when one has to wait patiently for it to arrive, visualizing the depressing event and feeling so helpless to avert it. There was little inducement for effort the next spring but the faith that keeps mankind struggling along against the most tremendous odds would not let them lie down on the job entirely.

So the next spring the farmers sowed their oats and wheat and planted their corn. The women planted their gardens and dropped seed potatoes into the hills as usual. The grasshoppers hatched out and began their attacks on the crops. As if there were not enough there already to handle the work, an army from the southwest swarmed in to help out and it certainly looked like all the crops must go. As evening approached the hoppers would gather on the rail fences to a depth of four inches, they were thick everywhere. The wagon tracks in the roads filled with them making the road so slippery that the iron rims on the wheels slipped and could not turn easily on the most gradual incline or hill.

In a desperate attempt to destroy some of the pests John Isles, who lived down on the river bottom made a trap for them. He fixed a tank on a two wheeled cart, put some kerosene in it and drove through his fields. This disturbed the hoppers who flew up and were caught in the tank of oil and killed. It was not a complete success but did help some.

Then, as suddenly as the insects had come they arose and left, a great swarm of insects that lifted like a dark cloud and sailed away, lifting the terrible load of depression from the shoulders of the people. The crops, on an average were damaged about one-half, some fields were totally ruined while others were hardly touched. Oats suffered the most, many of the fields not being worth harvesting. As usual the poorest man suffered the greatest loss and few could afford such a loss anyway. Some of them were so disgusted and financially ruined that they left for some other place which they hoped might be a better one. Most of the people, however, tried to forget about it, as they could have been much worse off and there was never yet a place that did not have its share of drawbacks and unpleasant aspects.

The Fourth of July was only a few days away and the people were in a perfect mood for putting on a big celebration. They didn't have much money to spend but that was no drawback to them because their good times never had depended on the lavish spending of money. They repaired the old merry-go-round, and spent the day playing baseball and other games and danced until they were weary at night. There were still many things to give them a contented feeling and they settled back into the pleasant easy going ways they had enjoyed before the grasshoppers came.

Indians!

The word traveled up and down the street with the speed of lightning and had about the same terrifying effect. Women dropped their dinner dish-washing, roused the men from their restful position under a shade tree, where they had paused before going out to their work, and the children came scampering into the house where they would be safe.

Johnny Green's Band! was the second warning that traveled the grape-vine route of communication and the people changed their frightened feeling of alarm to one of patient resignation. Indians did not come that way often and were always peaceful but the settlers never felt easy when a strange tribe came through. But Johnny Green's Band had been through there several times and they knew what to expect. Johnny was a well known character and the people did not fear him so much as they disliked his begging, pestering ways. He was a reasonable, amiable fellow however and could usually be coaxed or cajoled into a satisfactory settlement of his more unreasonable demands so he had become an interesting personality that the settlers endured with a patient good-fellowship that kept him friendly.

Johnny was a striking, picturesque figure as he rode at the head of his band on a high-stepping white horse. He sat erect on his silver mounted saddle holding the reins tightly so his horse stepped along with its head held high. The horse was named Flying Snow in honor of his speed and color. Johnny led his band from one place to another, traveling whichever direction pleased his fancy; visiting favorite campsites and hunting new ones. His band consisted of probably twenty men and a dozen squaws with several children of all sizes. The men rode horseback and the women and children rode on three wagons with their camping equipment.

The tent poles were laid lengthwise on the bolsters making a floor for the Indians to sit on and carry their belongings. They refused to use a wagon box preferring to sit on the flat surface formed by their tepee poles. They always expected to make a good haul in foodstuffs when they came through town so the people hurriedly gathered up anything they could think of that might appeal to them and were ready to hand it over.

The band halted in the middle of the street and the members proceeded to do their visiting from this vantage point. Johnny went first into the new store on the corner, stopping out in front to look over the new building that had not been there on his last visit. Dickson and Carpenter dreaded the thought of his entering the store where he would certainly demand many things from their attractive stocks. Taking a chance on diverting Johnny's attention Dickson met him at the door with several sticks of red and white candy and a red tassel for his horse's bridle. Flying Snow was the Indian's greatest pride, of far greater value and importance in his estimation than his squaw, and Dickson's gift for his horse pleased him immensely. He merely grunted his appreciation, however, and taking the articles quickly returned to his horse which he had left in the hands of one of the young bucks. He fastened the tassel to the bridle then stood back to admire the result. Apparently satisfied, he put the stick candy in a dirty leather pouch on his saddle and signalled to the squaws that they should start scouting around now.

Next Johnny went into Robert's store where Lyman was waiting to give him a string of red beads and a bottle of perfume. Lyman pulled the cork out of the bottle and placed it under the chief's nose hoping to please him with this unusual gift.

"Smells good, don't it chief?" the storekeeper asked pleasantly. The sweet odor caught Johnny's fancy at once for he was not as practical as he expected the squaws to be and could be put off with something that appealed to him whether it had any great value or not. He took the bottle, smelled again then replaced the cork and laughed uproarously.

"Me use," he declared, "me smell heap good. Me no give squaw this."

Putting it away carefully he strode out of the store, gave the beads to a small Indian girl then went into the Everhart Hotel. Will gave him some cigars and he went out satisfied and, hoping to add to this contended feeling, entered the drugstore where Doc Paul was waiting for the inevitable demand.

"Me heap thirsty. Me want drink," Johnny declared as he stood at the bar expectantly, the bright colors of the feathers in his headdress and his fancy clothes striking a vivid contrast against the somber appearance of the store.

Doc Paul gave him a mug of water and Johnny raised it to his lips with a grand flourish. The mug had hardly touched his lips when he discovered the deception and threw the mug to the floor in great disgust where it crashed in a dozen pieces, the water making a splash on the rough boards.

"White man fool Indian. Ugh, me no like. Me want whisky or me get mad," Johnny declared with an angry toss of his head.

Doc smiled good-naturedly and filled another mug with whisky, then holding it beyond the reach of the Indian's long, eager arm, made his bargain.

"You know, Johnny, you're not suppose to get any whisky here at all so you have to promise not to ask for anymore or you won't get this much. This is all you can have and you have to get out of here as soon as you drink it. Will you do it or will I have to call the Cop?"

Johnny had no love for Cops nor any desire to meet one and get into any trouble so with a belligerent air, he took the mug of whisky, drank the strong liquid, making a terrible face, then turned and left without further argument. He stood uncertainly in the street for a moment then walked over to Newman's blacksmith shop. There was nothing there he wanted but he was curious to see what was in the building and Newman afraid that he might be in a surly mood by this time looked about for something to give him. He could see nothing that he thought might be of interest to the Indian then suddenly thought of a small horseshoe hanging on a nail over the door. He had found it in the road one day. It must have been worn by a very small pony judging from the size.

"Here, Yonny," Newman said in his most friendly manner, for Indians were strange to him and he did not know just how to handle them. "I give you this to bring you much luck. It bring me luck and I make you present of it and you be lucky. Catch big fish and hit deer with bow and arrow."

"Me shoot straight now, but, me take," replied the Indian and left.

Meanwhile the squaws had gone to the houses begging for food. Eliza Carpenter gave one of them a jar of jelly and Mary Dickson gave one a sack of potatoes which they accepted but when Mrs. Newman offered some butter to a young squaw, she insisted on a chicken.

"Baby heap sick. Need chicken," the squaw declared.

Mrs. Newman did not believe her and as she didn't have many chickens she did not care to give any of them away. But the squaw appeared to be strongly set on having the chicken so Mrs. Newman decided to try to make a trade with her. The squaw was carrying a very nice basket with a lid in which she probably expected to put the chicken. It would make a very fine sewing

basket so she said to the Indian, "I'll give you a chicken if you will give me that basket."

The squaw considered this idea for a moment and seemed about to refuse but she took another look at the fat plump hen she wanted and relented. She handed the basket to Mrs. Newman and crept up and grabbed the hen before it had a chance to get away or make a squawk.

Mandy Hook had a fresh batch of bread cooling on the kitchen table so she gave a loaf of it to the old Indian woman who came to her door, which the visitor immediately broke into pieces and gave to the several children who had followed her, not forgetting the little papoose riding comfortably on her back.

Finally the Indians gathered in the middle of the street, apparently satisfied and ready to depart when a large shepherd dog belonging to Colonel Whitaker came trotting inquisitively down the street, trying in dog fashion to discover what all the excitement was about. Johnny spied him instantly and when the dog stopped to look him over made a grab for him but the dog eluded his grasp and backing away a few steps, barked angrily at him,

"Me want dog. Him fat. Good to eat," declared Johnny. Dog meat was a favorite food of the Indians and they would trade most anything for a dog.

"Oh, no, you can't have that dog," said Carpenter. "He belongs to Colonel Whitaker and he'd shoot every feather out of your bonnet if you touched him. Better leave him alone if you know what's good for you. Go on up to the river and catch some fish, the bass are biting good now."

Johnny continued to look longingly at the dog undecided what to do and still looking too determined to suit the white people. Then Doc Paul had a sudden inspiration.

"Say, big chief," he said in a soothing manner, "I know what you can do. Uncle Wes Hook butchered a couple of hogs this morning, You go up there and I bet he will give you the heads. But you better hurry or you'll be too late, his wife might decide to make some headcheese or something out of them. Get your crowd together and go on up there. It's the second house up there on the west side of the road."

This sounded pretty good to Johnny so he mounted Flying Snow and motioned for the others to follow. Women and children clambered onto the wagons and the entire procession moved slowly up the road, making a colorful spectacle with the bright feathers of the men's headdress, the squaws' shawls, and the horses.

They stopped at Wes Hook's place and Johnny demanded the hogs head.

"What makes you think I've got any hogheads here?" asked Wes.

Johnny pointed down the road where the group of people were still standing watching them.

"Drug man, name Doc, gave me pretty smelling water, he tell me you got hogs heads. Me want."

Wes surmised that this had been a scheme to get rid of the Indians so he went to the barn and got the heads and gave them to Johnny who wrapped

them in a blanket and dumped the bundle on the wagon which his squaw was driving.

Then they proceeded on their way up the road to Dr. Stuart's and continued their begging along the length of Stringtown until they reached Haskell's stage station where they pitched camp and stayed for a few days.

The people of the town returned to their homes and business places but in a few minutes Wes Hook opened the door of the drugstore and with a great pretense of anger strode up to Doc but before he could say anything Dock Paul asked in his friendliest manner, "Well, well, Uncle Wes, how are you today and what can I do for you?"

"You can pay me a dollar a piece for them two hogs head you gave away. You think you're so smart, sending that old beggar up to my place just to get rid of him."

"Now, Wes, you know very well those heads are not worth a dollar together and anyway just think what a good Samaritan you were. Here we got Johnny out of town and put an end to his pestering all the folks here just by your generosity. He really wanted Colonel Whitaker's dog and you know what might have happened if we had allowed that. The Colonel thinks a lot of that dog and he might have shot poor Johnny. So, don't you see what a lot of trouble you probably prevented by giving him something. All of us had to. Tell you what I'll do though, I'll settle for a mug of beer."

"Done." said Wes and the two men burst out laughing.

"Yeah," declared Wes, "John's a great fellow all right, but we'd kind of miss him around here even if he is a lazy, indolent fellow who hates the thought of work. I reckon he's just the way the Lord made him though and he can't help it. Fact is, there's plenty of white folks who are just as shiftless, about the only difference is in the color of their skin and they don't wear feathers. Yep, we'd kind of miss the old feller if he didn't come along once in a while. After all, we sort of took over his happy huntin' grounds so reckon we shouldn't object to payin' a little rent once in a while just as a friendly courtesy. Well, guess I'd better go home and cut up that meat and try to sell it before you give the rest of it away. Goodby, Doc."

"Goodby Wes."

Each year had marked some progress in the growth of the little town and the comfortable feeling of prosperity brought a sense of well-being to the settlers that added greatly to their peace of mind and the numerous business places attracted a good-natured crowd of loafers who met to visit, exchange views and news and have a good time.

About a mile south of town lived the Hewitt Ross family, the father, mother and two sons, George and Tom. Hewitt was an ambitious, amiable fellow fond of jokes, full of fun and an entertaining talker. He had been engaged in a variety of business ventures during his lifetime and was always busy, interested, on the alert for any new enterprise that might make a profitable investment. Though he was a recent newcomer to this vicinity, he had already been elected to the office of Justice of the Peace and made a dollar marrying couples now and then. One room of his house was used as a grocery store in which he kept some of the more common commodities. People living in Swede Bend traded at his store since it was closer than Hook's Point and in busy times or bad weather, this meant a saving in time and effort to secure groceries there.



Ross was anxious to secure the contract for the stage route being operated between Fort Dodge and Boone by Elisha Pinapacker. The stage went north as far as Haskell's station where the passengers' luggage and mail were ferried across the river in boats during high water times. The stage now made the trip every day and furnished a good business for the driver. Finally Pinapacker gave up the job and Ross got the contract, turning the responsibility of driving the stage over to his boys. The post office was transferred to Dickson and Carpenter's store.

The people were becoming more anxious all the time for a railroad to be built through town because they were so far from Boone or Webster City and the problem of disposing of their livestock and surplus grain was most distressing. Farmers drove their hogs and cattle to Boone to market and the business men had to haul their merchandise in wagons either from Boone or Webster City. A railroad company from the south secured the right of way but never tried to build a road. Then the Northwestern Railroad Company tried to get the right of way but were unable to procure it.

Colonel Whitaker offered 40 acres of his land if the company would come through Hook's Point but there seemed no possibility of this happening. This was a very good location for a town and railroad because there was a natural drainage. The railroad would run through the ravine between the new store and Whitakers' buildings, which then ran northwest down past Sulphur Springs to the Des Moines River bottom. Ross had some plans of his own for a town on the site of his farm but had only faint hopes of their realization.

When the corn was picked and in the cribs, the people settled down for the long winter and when the evenings lengthened and the kerosene lamps and tallow candles were lighted, the men often walked or rode to town to spend the evening in the stores and tavern. Sometimes the women came along and visited with the families of the business men and in the hotel with Mrs. Bowman, the new family in the hotel where Will Everhart had been in business.

The men formed a circle around Carpenter's store, a favorite loafing place, as they drifted into town; Colonel Whitaker, Stevens who was sawing lumber as industriously as before the fire, Wes Hook, Dr. Stuart, Bowman, Will Hook, Bill Ervin and several from farther out in the country who came in to get their mail and catch up on community news. Hewitt Ross was a frequent visitor, riding his horse up early, visiting in the stores and finally joining the group in the grocery store where many lively arguments took place and innocent jokes were told.

"Looks like we are in for another hard winter," Ross said one night as he stamped the snow from his heavy overshoes and removed his coat. "The wind is blowing pretty hard from the northwest tonight."

"Yeah, it's a cold night for a man to be out ridin' a horse," replied Dickson. "Did you put him in a barn somewhere?"

"I put him in Bowman's barn along with those old nags of his," Ross said as he took a chair in the circle. "But this ain't cold weather yet. Why, when I first came to this part of the country, before I bought that farm down south here, it was so cold that the wind blew the smoke in a straight line from one house to another, froze it there, and the cats walked from one house to another on it."

"Sounds like Hew is all wound up again, don't it fellas?" Bill Ervin asked, taking a new piece of wood on which to whittle into fine shavings, as

he enjoyed the conversation. "Suppose you been out huntin' again today too. What did you get this time, a bear?"

"No, I was up on Lake Skillet today and visited with a couple I married late last summer. I met them up north here a couple of miles, 'long about in July. They were on their way to see me, so I could marry them.

They were walking along both of them barefooted and dressed in the plainest everyday clothes. They said they wanted to get married and as I always carry my little Bible with me and a marriage certificate to be prepared, I just told 'em to come under a shade tree, got off my horse, threw the rein over my arm and married them. They didn't have a wedding ring of their own but had borrowed her mother's and they seemed so hard up that I didn't charge 'em anything, told 'em to take the dollar or whatever they thought it was worth and consider it a wedding present.

"I suppose they paid you today then," said Bill.

"Nope. They wanted to but I told them I would make it up on somebody else sometime. So they insisted I must stay for supper. They had just butchered and I never ate better pork chops and cornbread in my life. I think that couple will get somewhere someday, they're fine folks."

"Don't hear any more about the railroad, do you, Ross?" asked Wes Hook.

"No, I expect we might well forget about it for a while. That other survey will hold for several years more so no other company will come in and start one. It's just what we need to boost this country, though and it's a shame we can't get it.

"It takes time and we will have to be patient," said Dr. Stuart. "It will cost a lot of money and mean a tremendous amount of work, but it will get here sometime. We're going along very well, especially when I think of the changes that have been made since I moved my family here in '59. Wasn't much here then and then the war came along and put everything back so we are gaining some all the time even if it does seem slow."

Just then a man entered the store hurriedly and asked for Dr. Stuart. The doctor rose from his chair promptly and asked what the trouble was.

"It's my wife, she is awful sick. Will you come right away?"

"Certainly," replied the doctor, "but I will have to go home and get my saddlebags."

"No, I have them here. I went to your house first and your wife said you were in town so she told me to take them along. We can ride double on my horse. It isn't very far."

"No use in that," said Ross. "Take my horse. He is saddled and bridled ready to go. You'll make better time on two horses."

"All right, I'll do that. Thanks," said the doctor.

When the men had gone, the others settled back in their chairs again. Wes Hook aimed at the spittoon and hit it with unerring accuracy.

"Has anybody been spearing any fish these days?" he asked.

"I tried it last week," said Bill Ervin, "But I didn't have any luck. The river is too high."

"I always thought a man was wasting his time anyway, trying to spear fish," said Ross. "I would much rather hunt, a man is apt to get something that way."

"Well, everybody can't hunt as well as you," said Carpenter. "If all of us could get a deer everytime like you do, we might like hunting better too. Have you shot any lately?"

"Well, not since last fall. I had a real streak of luck one day." Hew was known for his ability to tell stories as well as for his hunting prowess so the listeners waited expectantly for the latest one. "I was out hunting down in the woods south of my place and soon found some deer tracks. I followed them quite a distance and never saw the deer so I was beginning to get fagged out and ready to go home when the deer suddenly sprang out of a hazelbrush thicket just ahead of me. I jerked my gun into position and was ready to aim and shoot when it ran around another clump of bushes. I was standing near a tree and I knew I would not have time to get around it and aim from the other side before the deer could get away so I just banged my gun against the tree bending the barrel so it pointed right at him. I pulled the trigger and got him. He fell like a rock."

"I suppose," remarked Colonel Whitaker drily, "you dined on venison for a week."

"Oh sure," replied Ross with a grin, "only my wife said the meat tasted more like salt pork."

"In fact," suggested Wes, "it was salt pork. That is almost as good as the time you killed the deer down by the river. Did you ever hear about that fellas? Well, Hew here, was hoein' corn down on the river bottom years ago when a deer came out of the timber on its way to the river to get a drink. Hew didn't have his gun along that day, kind of careless like you know, for a seasoned old hunter like him; but he wanted that deer powerful bad. So, he took after it with his hoe. He chased the deer up and down hills and along sandbars until he finally chased it out on the ice where the deer couldn't walk on the slick surface and Hew killed it with his hoe."

"Some chase, I'd say," declared Carpentered. "Funny, ain't it, the way Hew is always seein' deer; the animals must know they are safe around him. Hey you, closest to the stove, fix the fire. It's gettin' cold in here."

Will Hook removed his feet from the side rails of the stove from which position he had been sitting comfortably, tipped back on the rear legs of his chair, placed his feet and chair legs on the floor with a crash, and reached for a big chunk of sheel bark hickory. Opening the stove door, he pushed the wood inside, swung the door shut, and returned to his former comfortable position. Whitaker helped himself to the crackers in a convenient barrel while the others replenished their pipes or took another chew of tobacco.

The stories continued for another hour when Dr. Stuart returned from his call and the meeting broke up. The doctor warmed his hands and informed the men that a new baby had arrived at the farmer's home, an occasion for rejoicing for babies meant so much in this new country that needed many people to carry on the work.

"The stork always picks a cold night, doesn't he?" asked Wes.

"Oh, this waa'n't so bad. I've been out in colder weather and it might be worse in a couple of days. There is a big ring 'round the moon tonight with only two stars inside it so we can look for a storm in about two days.

"I hope you are wrong on that prediction, Doc," said Ross. "There is plenty of snow now and the boys will have some hard trips if we get more and it starts drifting. They can travel right along with the cutter and two horses as long as there ain't any passengers, otherwise they will have to use a bobsled."

"Ain't many travelers now, is there?" asked Bowman. "Don't seem like we have any business at all lately in the hotel."

"No, it ain't very pleasant trip across country now. People go around on the trains if they possibly can. If the snow gets too deep I s'pose the boys will have to go horseback but that sure makes a cold day's work. Wish I was home now but it won't take long on Barney, he travels fast when he is headed for home. Well, good night, boys."

A cheerful chorus of "Goodnights" answered him as he went out into the night to get his horse. The other men slipped on their fur coats and buttoned them, put on fur caps and mittens, turned up their coat collars and went toward their homes. Wes stopped at the hotel for Sarah, and Dr. Stuart stopped at Mandy's house for Mary, then altogether they walked the short distance to their homes, their voices sounding clear and distinct on the frosty air.

The doctor's prophecy was partly correct. More snow came on the wings of a northwest wind which piled up in drifts on the prairie but lasted only a day then the weather settled down to a long spell of zero temperatures. Farmers came to town occasionally to bring in their butter and exchange it for sugar, coffee, and other groceries, and kerosene. They followed a meandering route around the drifts, the horses plunging through the deep snow faithfully. School continued in a slightly haphazard manner, many of the pupils lived too far to walk the long distance on severely cold days, so attended irregularly. Social affairs were dropped, young and old preferring to remain at home beside comfortable firesides while the windows frosted over and the cold crept in around doors making the corners of the room chilly.

Chapter Thirteen

Indian Summer

January and February were slow in passing, with people shut in most of the time. Brisk wind kept the snow blowing across the prairie, filling in the tracks made by sleds, through which teams were again driven, packing the snow into a hard mass that made easier traveling than breaking new roads. The first of March brought south winds, chilly and raw, but warmer each day brekking winter's fierce grip on the country.

On the morning of the twelfth of March, the Stuart family prepared to go visiting for the day. It was the first wedding anniversary of Minnie (Stuart) and George Ballard and the families had not seen each other since Christmas. Dr. Stuart spread some straw on the bottom of the box and placed blankets over it, then hitched up the team of hrrses. Mary, Eva, Dick and Ed bundled up in warm wraps, took some hot bricks to keep their feet warm, covered up with comforts and away they sped down the snow-packed road. The horses trotted making the sleigh bells jingle merrily. In a short time they arrived at the Ballard home a mile and a half south east of Hook's Point.

Minnie saw them coming and when the sled drew close to the door she flung it open with a glad cry of welcome. She hugged and kissed each one as they came in and George shook hands all around.

"I was so sure you would come today that I have a nice dinner nearly ready," Minnie said as she took their wraps and gave them chairs by the stove. "I told George if you didn't come he had to take me home tomorrow."

"Have you been homesick, daughter?" asked her father.

"Yes, I was sometimes although I have kept busy most of the time. You will be surprised when I show you all the things I have made."

"Eddie, did you bring in those things?" asked Mary.

"Sure. I set them on the kitchen table."

"Oh, now what did you bring for us this time?" Minnie asked, digging into the box, joyously.

"Nothing much, just some things I had." said Mary.

"That's what you always say; you couldn't come unless you brought something and I'm still childish enough to expect it. Oh! some doughnuts and head cheese, well you won't get any of these things for dinner, you have to eat my cooking today. A new apron for me and a pair of socks for George, he can use those all right. I have a terrible time keeping his darned so I never could knit them for him. Thank you so much, Mother."

"You are very welcome Minnie. You certainly are a good housekeeper, your home is so attractive and cozy."

"Yes, I do better than when I was at home, don't I? But there is no one else to do it so I have to. A girl can't go on reading and dreaming after she gets married."

"You did all right at home but you always looked so pale and thin I

didn't expect as much of you as the other girls. You look fine now."

"Yes, work agrees with me. Have you seen Mary Jane?"

"I walked up there yesterday," said Eva. "They are fine. I told Mary we might come here today and she said for me to greet you for her. The children grow so fast. Ot will start to school in the spring. Tressie is the sweetest little girl, talks all the time and plays so much with Wid so that helps Mary with her work."

"I'd surely like to see all of them. But excuse me now for I must finish up the dinner."

Meanwhile the men had gone out and put the team in the barn and looked at George's stock. Now they came in and visited until dinner was ready.

Minnie seated them at the kitchen table with its red and white checked cloth and served them with an ease and efficiency that pleased her family very much. Roast chicken and dressing, gravy and fluffy mashed potatoes, sauerkraut and white bread were passed and the boys did not refuse second helpings, even taking a second piece of mince meat pie with very little urging.

"Gosh, sis, you're a GOOD cook!" declared Dick. "Where did you learn?"

"At home, you old tease. I shouldn't have given you any pie. Maybe it will make you sick like the baked potatoes did that time."

"When was that?" asked Dick with a puzzled expression.

"Don't you remember when Mother was up to Mary's when Wid was a baby and we roasted apples and potatoes in the fireplace ashes and you ate so many potatoes with butter on them that you got sick?"

"Oh, I wasn't very sick," remonstrated Dick.

"Yes, you were too," said Eva, "you couldn't hardly wait until Papa came home to give you some Ipecac."

"I never heard about that before," said Mary.

The others all laughed merrily and Dick joined in, able to take jokes as well as hand them out.

When the dishes were washed Minnie showed her visitors the things she had been making, a braided rug and a crazy quilt top. Every seam in the quilt was finished with various kinds of feather stitching and blanket stitch in different colors.

"This is lovely Minnie," said Mary. "Are you going to quilt it or tie it?"

"I'm going to tie it. I have that wool you gave me for a wedding present to use as a filler and I'm going to line it with dark colored flannel so it will be real warm. George made some frames for me to put it in and he says he will help me tie it so we'll have fun."

"Indeed you will. I'm making a top for Mary Jane. It seems to keep her busy sewing for the children so I will help her out. I don't suppose you have heard that Aunt Mandy is moving away from town?"

"No, I haven't. Why does she want to move and where is she going?"

"You tell her, Papa, I can't keep track of so much changing around."

"Well, she has rented the place to Dickson. He doesn't like working in a store very well and would rather be farming so he made Mandy a good offer for her place and she decided to let him have it. Ed Johnson is going to work in the store in Dickson's place. He and Delilah (Deck) will live on the west side of the street next to Carpenter's house. Mandy has bought five acres of John McKinney's claim. There is a log house down below the hill where Frank Hook lived after he moved from town and she expects to have it moved up by the road close to the McKinney school house."

"Then Finch won't go to school in town, and Henry Lucas will be his teacher there, won't he " asked George.

"Yes, and there is a large school up there too as Stringtown is rather thickly populated and there are a number of families east and west who have children attending there. Gleasons and Jakeways and Swicks, Mitchells, Gregorys and Devores, must be twenty scholars in that school but they have a good master. Henry can discipline the older ones as easy as the little ones and teach them plenty at the same time.

"When does Mandy plan to move?" asked Minnie.

"About the first of April, I think. She can't get the house moved until then. When this snow settles a little we can put some skids under the house and it will pull along easily with one team. And now, Mary it is three o'clock don't you think we had better be starting for home?"

"Surely not yet!" exclaimed Minnie. "The time has gone so fast, it doesn't seem like you have been here very long at all."

"I know but it will be chore time when we get home and the house will be cold and I like to get home early, too." said Mary.

In a few moments George had the team hitched to the sled and the visitors bundled up warm again with the hot bricks brought from the top of the stove and the team started out on a brisk trot for home. Minnie waved from the window with a happy smile tremendously pleased by the visit of her family, the good cheer they brought and the news of other people.

Mandy Hook moved into her new home the first week of April. Will, Elizabeth and Finch were all excited at the idea of living in a different house. Their new home was not as nice as the old one, made of brick, with a good kitchen, but the thought of living in a log house was fun too.

"We can shoot through the chinks like the soldiers do when a band of wild Indians comes along," said Finch with one eye squinted as if getting a bead on a redskin at that very moment.

"Don't be silly! said Will. "We don't see any troublesome Indians anymore and if you shot at one you probably would have a fight on your hands so you better not try scaring any of them."

"Now don't be silly yourself," replied Finch. "Can't we play we are fighting them from the house as well as from behind bushes like I've seen you and the other boys do?"

"That's kid stuff," scoffed Will. "But let's quit arguing and help Mother with the work today. You will have to start to school again tomorrow."

The next day Finch and Elizabeth were enrolled in the McKinney school and entered into the duties and pleasures, ups and downs of a country school. Every school had its leader in mischief or fun and in this one Frank Gregory, a husky 16 year old boy had most of the boys, especially the smaller ones, under his thumb. He teased the little boys and when Finch was added to the group he tried teasing him too. But Finch, though only 12 years old had plenty of spunk and was not afraid to fight.

"You'd better leave me alone or I'll black your eye," he warned Frank.

Frank looked at the slender, fair haired boy whom he thought would have no chance with his superior strength and height.

"So you think you can lick me, do you?" asked Frank, "Why don't you try it?"

Quick as a flash, Finch tackled Frank and the fight was on. The other scholars gathered in a circle around the couple, shouting excitedly. Frank was awkward and slow while Finch was wiry and tough and could hit twice while Frank hit once and Finch could elude his punches many times. Most of the pupils were on Finch's side and shouted encouragement to him but Frank had one pal, Mitchell, who attempted to help him. Milt Devore took after him and chased him around the school house at the same time yelling, "Go for him, Hook!" In about three minutes Frank had enough and ran home crying, and in another few minutes returned by parental order, but he never teased the boys any more and all became good friends.

Henry Lucas had watched the fight, ready to intervene if necessary, but he realized the wisdom of sometimes letting pupils settle their own difficulties. Although he had never gone to school very much, he was recognized as one of the best teachers in the country; he had a brilliant mind and had educated himself. It was not so difficult to get a certificate to teach especially when he had first begun, because teachers were so scarce. He had married Elizabeth Hook, daughter of Will and Sarah, and they lived between the Hook and McKinney farms, and his own children were among his pupils.

Along with his ability to teach the children the things they ought to know, he was always a wise and efficient disciplinarian. He paid little attention to the young children's misdemeanors, they were merely the results of too much suppressed energy during the long hours at their desks; but the older pupils minded him perfectly. Lucas always said it was easy to tell when any of the scholars were up to mischief because all the others would start watching him closely to see if he would notice the disturbance.

School closed on the last day of May with a big picnic on the grounds. Parents and small children came in wagons and buggies bringing baskets of food and at noon the dinner was spread under the shade of the trees, resplendent in their foliage of new, green leaves. There were great stacks of sandwiches made of homemade bread and boiled cured ham, baked beans, dried corn, cooked and creamed, scalloped potatoes, pickles made from the cucumbers that had been put down in salt the preceding fall, then soaked out and pickled with vinegar made from apple cider, dried apple pie, raisin pie, cake and coffee.

At two o'clock the crowd assembled in the school room for the afternoon program. The girls were delighted at this opportunity to show off their new

dresses of plaid gingham to such good advantage. Their pink and blue calicos with hair ribbons of matching colors tied to their pigtails, their black shoes neatly polished with the soot from the bottom of stove lids or black iron kettles, made charming array. The boys had refused to put on their Sunday clothes, declaring there would be no fun on a picnic wearing good clothes. They were shy and ill at ease at this undesirable task of singing and speaking before an audience that no amount of practice could ever make easy but the ordeal was finally over, and everybody went home happy.

Church services continued in the new building with a moderate degree of regularity, different ministers came in and preached and other times Sunday School services were conducted by various members of the congregation. Grandpa Cleveland was on hand to lead the singing school and to assist in the advancement of the church work. Reverend Canion had preached in the church several times and the audience was well pleased with his sermons. He was aware that this town offered a good opportunity for a minister but there was no parsonage in which to live so he suggested that the community attempt to raise money with which to build one. This idea appealed to the people so Canion and Cleveland contacted the men and took their donations which were used to pay for the lumber; again the men worked together and built the house on the west side of the road near Carpenter's house.

Reverend and Mrs. Canion, and their son Mont, moved into the comfortable three room house and became popular residents of the town. Canion was a Methodist preacher and most of the settlers were Methodists but all others came regardless of their particular faith; some attended who had no church affiliation but realized the powerful influence for good that a church exerts in a community, so attended for that reason, and all worked together congenially.

In the early spring of 1869, an itinerant preacher visited Hook's Point and created some interest and amusement among the people. Reverend Kilgore rented a room at Bowman's hotel and attempted to stir up some enthusiasm in his Seven Day Adventist belief. He wore a long, black cloak and was an animated speaker in every group of people he encountered. In a most serious and conscientious manner he declared the world would come to an end in a short time, therefore, everyone should repent of his sins and prepare for the end.

He held meetings at the church when he first came but interest soon dwindled and, unable to get an audience, he gave this up and carried on his crusade in the stores, homes, and anywhere he could get someone to listen to him. People listened for a time with a tolerant smile and joked pleasantly with him.

"Now, listen here, Reverend," someone would say good naturedly, "the world isn't coming to an end yet, why it hardly has a good start." Another would say, "This country is too new yet and too wet to burn. Nope, we'll take our chances."

None of the teasing had the power to dim his ardor or sway him from his purpose in which he was sincerely honest. Finally he succeeded in convincing a few persons to embrace his religion. John, Will and Eli Ballard were deeply interested in the new cult and invited Kilgore to the home of John Ballard where he remained as a guest and the discussion continued. So completely did they succumb to the preaching of this minister that they made some ascension robes for themselves. These robes were long white gowns, made with wide flowing sleeves and worn with a wide belt around the waist, tied in a bow from which long fringe hung. The men climbed up on haystacks and buildings

and stood with arms outstretched apparently to be as near Heaven as possible when the end came.

While their religious zeal was at its height a strange thing happened. About three o'clock one afternoon the sunshine was dimmed and darkness gradually settled over the countryside. There were no clouds in the sky, no explanation of the early darkness; people looked at their clocks and watches wondering if they had stopped but all were ticking along merrily as usual. The chickens went hurriedly to roost and the cows came up from the pasture thinking it was milking time.

Kilgore, feeling that Fate had played into his hands took advantage of his opportunity. Jumping on one of John's horses he started on a gallop for Hook's Point, stopping along the road to tell Dr. Stuarts and Wes Hooks that the world was coming to an end. Then he dashed on into town, threw the bridle reins carelessly around a hitching post and ran into the stores and houses telling everyone to be prepared; that the end was near. People were unable to explain the strange phenomenon but were still skeptical of the preacher's statement.

When Kilgore returned to Ballard's all the family was dressed in their ascension robes and were waiting for the end. When chore time came they did the chores hastily then returned to their vigil and waited through the night, faithful to Kilgore's belief.

The next morning the sun arose in all its usual splendor, bringing welcome light to a rather nervous world which had never waited more anxiously for the sunrise. In a few hours an old man came in from the country and explained that never in all his life had he seen such a total eclipse of the sun. People were a bit chagrined because they hadn't thought of it themselves, but as no one had ever seen such a thing before, they felt that their ignorance was excusable, so relaxed their nerves in whole hearted laughter over the comical aspects of the incident.

Up at the Ballard home the crestfallen group went about their work in a quiet manner, little was said, but the preacher insisted that this was undoubtedly a warning to the people to be prepared for the end that now must be very near when the world would be consumed by fire and only those who had repented would be spared from a terrible fate.

The preacher was teased more than ever because he could not bring the world to an end and finally he suggested to the Ballard's that they go with him to a place where people would be more sympathetic with their belief and where they could enjoy the society of others who shared their religion. John disposed of all his property except a wagon and two teams of horses, one he expected to drive and the other he left with Finch. This was a beautiful black team that shone in the sunshine like black satin. Finch visited frequently at the Ballard home and played with the children, John, Lode, Allie, and Ada, and John often let him drive the team for him. So, knowing Finch's affection for the team, he told him he was instructing them to his care. There was, undoubtedly, a faint but very real thread of disbelief in John's mind and he probably figured that he would then have the team if the world continued to roll along in its same old ways.

John told the boy to till the fields of grain that were growing well though the corn was badly in need of plowing due to the recent neglect. Finch did not feel competent to handle such a large responsibility but the group was in such a hurry to get started that he found himself with a job

to do, so tried in his boyish way to do his best.

This religious group joined another in the southern part of the state where it stayed for about six weeks. When nothing happened the Ballard's finally tired of the idea and returned home, their interest in religion at a new low ebb, and the fields mostly a sorry crop of weeds, the best that Finch had been able to do. John picked up his old work of farming, repairing shoes and making coffins for those for whom the world did really come to an end, apparently content to wait until his own time came to leave this world in the usual manner, placing his faith in the Methodist religion and always managing a friendly reply to all who delighted to tease him about his temporary religion.

Since the old stage route between Des Moines and Fort Dodge had been discontinued, Haskell's business at the station was at a standstill. The Ross boys drove between Boone and Webster City, making the trip up and back in one day when the weather and roads were good. There was now no need for a hotel at the river crossing for no one stayed overnight, and there was no need of a livery barn where horses could be left and changed for others, so Haskells moved to Boone in the spring of 1870 and the Sconsin family came to live on the farm with their three sons, Nels, Ole, and Charlie.

Most of the time the Ross boys drove a buckboard, a light buggy with one seat and a flat bottom on which they placed the mail and any other packages that came for the stores and people of the small towns of Ridgeport and Hook's Point. Hewitt Ross owned several fine horses and they traveled at a fast pace over the uneven road that wound along the route. When the snow was deep the buckboard was replaced by a cutter or a bobsled and the mail went through if it was possible for the horses to make the trip. Dickson and Carpenter's store continued with the postoffice; George and Tom left the mail there and often dropped into Bowman's hotel for a lunch and to rest the horses a few minutes at the half way point of the trip.

During the spring and fall when the roads were full of mudholes and the buggy wheels cut deep into the mire it took all day to make the trip to Webster and another to make the return trip. At these times the outfit pulled into town, the horses weary and mud spattered and the driver and buggy in about the same condition; under these conditions the driver stopped at the hotel for dinner and fed his team well and rested them for the remainder of the trip.

Summer passed uneventfully except for the fact that the Steven's sawmill was going out of business. Along the river, water power was replacing the old steam engine because it was cheaper. Stevens could not compete with the prices of the river mill owners so he gave up his mill work and found other employment. The people were sorry to see the old mill go, for although it was cheaper to take their grain and logs to the river mills, it was also less convenient. But time passes on and all things must conform to the changes thus created.

Indian summer came in October after a brief cold spell that caused ice to freeze along the edges of the creeks and brought a sudden end to the luxurious growth of wild flowers and plants in Nature's summertime beauty. It was replaced with the brilliant hues of autumn, equally as beautiful as Nature dressed itself in its last gorgeous gown of riotous color before bowing to the inevitable arrival of winter and its drab cloak.

Doc Paul and his boys, Grant and Jim went out in the woods to search for the ginseng plants that grew along out of the way places and which required a

sharp eye to find. The plant grew to a height of approximately 18 inches, the leaves shooting up slender and very dark green. The root was composed of several bulbs about four or five inches long and an inch in diameter. These were dug up, washed and dried, then used in a variety of medicines which Doc Paul sold in his drug store.

The sumac turned from a bright green to a dark red making a gay patch of color among the hazelbrush and gooseberry bushes. All the many trees, proud elms, majestic oaks, sturdy walnut, slender ash and dainty willow gradually turned into giant bouquees as their leaves changed from solid green to yellow orange, red and brown with here and there a few leaves that seemed to be stubbornly refusing to accept Nature's new style edict. A smoky haze hung over the distant horizon, suggesting the smoke from an early explorer's camp-fire lingering over the country as a reminder of other courageous souls.

Gentle, playful breezes swept across the timber, dislodging the brown, crisp leaves and sending them in frolicsome, dizzy whirls to earth where they gathered in the ravines and piled up in drifts at the foot of steep hills. The yellow leaves from the willows along the river banks, floated down to the surface of the water where the waves caught them and tossed and spun them about like tiny sailboats on a mighty sea. Insects lit on the decks of the fairy boats like bold sea pirates commandeering a strange ship.

On Saturday the boys and girls hurried to the timber to revel in this last chance to enjoy the beauties of the woods. Their happy laughter and merry words were muffled by the crunch of dry leaves as they shuffled through crisp piles in search of nuts to put in their pails and sacks. Crabapples, mellowed by the frost, were shaken from the trees and picked up, their gummy skins sticking to the children's hands, already dark with walnut stains. Tired little backs were forgotten as they thought of the excellent sauce the sour little crabs made when properly cooked and sweetened with sorghum. When the sun began its slow descent beyond the western treetops and sank into its blankets of yellow, pink, blue and lavender like a weary traveler at the end of a day's long journey, the air turned cool and the children made their way toward home.

As night settled over the land shrouding the homes in darkness soft as black velvet, lamplight appeared in the windows and families gathered around the table to eat the evening meal leisurely, engaged in pleasant conversation. Little tousled heads nodded sleepily as the group lingered at the table in that companionable atmosphere that seems to come particularly at that hour marking the end of a perfect day in a perfect way.

A round golden moon peeked over the eastern prairie and began its journey across the star-studded heavens bringing light and beauty to the world. As its beams reached across the country, it bathed the rough buildings in soft shadowy outlines making them beautiful while the light through the bare limbs of trees traced a pattern of exquisite lace work on the earth.

This was the night for a hayride. Young men filled the rack with hay and the young ladies climbed aboard amid much laughter and pretended helplessness as the merry crowd traveled down the road with the horses trotting along briskly. Later there would be games, and lunch, songs and whispers, and romance beneath a prairie moon.

Wild ducks and geese paused in their precipitous flight to the sunny south for their winter sojourn, turning the ponds and rivers into a hunter's paradise. The eager hunters took their guns down from the pegs on the wall, strapped on their ammunition belts with pouches for lead and powder, loaded

the gun carefully then walked near to the ponds; at last crawling through the tall prairie grass until within easy range of the game.

Near the river the hunters concealed themselves in the willows and brush along the shore until the birds came close, then aimed and fired. There was a fast and furious flutter of wings as the panic stricken birds rose and sailed away, their frightened loud honking echoing from the hill and valleys

Wild turkeys strutted around in the timber, bright eyes alert and watchful, as they searched for food to fatten themselves for the winter. Now there was corn in the farmer's fields which stored up heat and energy, but when the snow lay deep in the woods, it would be difficult to find weed seeds and dry berries. When in their midst, the hunter's gun blasted the stillness of the woods, leaving one of their number lying on the ground, they raised their wings in flight and flew away to a safer place while the hunter slung his turkey over his shoulder and wended his way homeward.

Indian Summer! That lovely time of year when summer returns for an encore, like the extra chorus of a beautiful song that is more perfect because it is fleeting; and like a sweet hope fulfilled, and the last note of a song, it is remembered when Nature's loveliness bows to Winter's call.

Chapter Fourteen

An Old Time Fiddler

Iowa was still in a raw, untamed state with its unbridged streams, its thick timberland, its sweeping prairies unbroken for miles, its acres and acres of land waiting for the sharp edge of the plow to turn the tall blue-stem prairie grass under, exposing the rich black soil full of the fertility for producing food for man and beast. Iowa was still a part of the west that lay beyond the Mississippi River, hundres of miles from the more thickly settled states of the east, and far enough from the safety of civilization to please a great many people. It had great promise and possibilities of a rich future and many people were content to settle down on a small homestead that would anchor their family to the security and future prosperity of these rolling acres of farm land.

However, the same brave spirit of adventure, that eager longing to push farther on west through the wild, lonely country that lay beyond the horizon where the sun set in all the gorgeous glory of mountain peaks and peaceful valleys, that peioneer spirit that started the settlement of the new world, still burned in th hearts of brave men and loyal women and kept the march of courageous people moving on and on; slowly but surely bringing the new country under the softening, taming influence of human hands. The same call of the west that had brought Isaac Hook to this location and started this fine little town, that had brought Dr. Stuart out here to administer to the needs of the community, that had made all the progress of the westward movement possible, was as strong as ever and kept the great army of trail breakers constantly on the move.

By far the most interesting point in the west was Yankton, South Dakota, and to this place many people still journeyed either as their ultimate destination or as a place from which they might look about for a favorable location. Work was plentiful, land for homesteaders was easily secured and there was the thrill of traveling to strange places, of following the trail and seeing with their own eyes what lay beyond the place where the blue sky meets the earth in mysterious promise.

The lure of the west had prompted Anson and Mary Deo to give up their home at Clinton, Iowa; load the family and a few possessions into a covered wagon and strat out for Yankton. Unlike many other emigrants, Anson drove a team of horses hoping to make the trip more quickly that way. Mary and Charles, a year old rode on the high seat with Anson and the other boys, Claude 12 years old, Adlaska (Tat) seven years old, Albert (Allie) three years old rode in the back part of the wagon. Anson did not take any cattle along nor any oxen, depending only on one longlegged cow to furnish milk for the family's use along the way.

They had been on the road about a week when they arrived at the home of Henry and Sarah Nickerson, four miles east of Hook's Point. Sarah had received a letter from her Sister Mary and had been expecting their arrival for two days.

It was four o'clock on a warm pleasant day in September in 1870 when they drove into the yard and the Nickersons came hurrying out to greet them.

"Hello, Mary," Sarah said kissing her sister, "you were a long time coming."

"It's a slow trip with such a heavy load," Mary replied.

"Horses look kinda fagged out, Anson," Henry said, casting a speculative eye at the team.

"Yeah, they ain't used to such steady travelin' and the roads are awful rough," Anson said, "I ain't sure yet I hadn't ought to trade 'em off for a yoke of oxen only they're so doggoned slow."

"We don;t want anything that goes any slower or we'll never get to Yankton," Mary remarked. "Not that I care so much only I don't want to get stranded half way between here and there."

"They can make the trip all right," Anson said reassuringly as he petted each one with a gentle hand, "They're a good old team even if they do have only one pair of eyes between 'em."

The boys could no longer restrain their longing to get out of the wagon and move around though their bashful natures prevented them from joining in the conversation at first. Sarah, noticing one boy standing uncomfortably beside his mother, exclaimed, "Why, what's the matter with this little boy, his feet are all wrapped up. Did he get hurt."

"Yes, he did, and I've had about enough of this traveling already," Mary said as she put Charles, who had been squirming discontentedly in her arms, down on the ground where he could play. "I've got too many boys to watch. Last night I was washing the supper dishes and Allie was sitting on a chair by the campfire. Somehow he managed to get the legs of the chair too close to the fire and they burned enough to let the chair tip forward, plunging his feet into the ashes and coals, blistering them awful bad in spots."

"Oh, dear, that's terrible," Sarah said as she picked Allie up in her arms sympathetically, "Do they hurt you much now, honey?"

Allie shook his head bashfully and his mother answered for him, "He doesn't complain much. I put some soda and water on them and I think that took some of the burn out."

"Well, no wonder you don't like traveling. But do come in, I have supper almost ready, we will eat first and the men can do the chores afterwards. I know you must be tired and hungry," Sarah commented as she led the way to the house carrying Allie.

"It is tiresome on the road," Mary complained wearily, helping the toddling baby along. "Come on children, let's go in with Aunt Sarah and get washed up nice and clean again."

Henry and Anson cared for the team, for like all true sons of the prairie, the welfare of their horses is of prime importance and always placed ahead of their own. Going to the store on an errand the next day, Henry learned that the townspeople were planning to have a dance if they could find someone to play for them.

"Here is the man you are looking for then", Henry told the group to whom he had introduced his brother-in-law.

"Can you play a violin?" Dickson asked with instant interest.

"Well, I played for quite a few dances back in Clinton," Anson replied.

"He's the best fiddler that ever hit these parts," Henry declared. "You just ought to hear him once. Ain't anybody around town got a fiddle?"

"I've got an old one of Frank's over home," Will Hook replied.

"Go get it and we'll have Anson play us a tune. Will you do it?" Henry asked.

"Sure, it won't take but a minute," and Will hastened off in search of the violin.

When he returned Anson took the violin and tuned it with a practiced hand, then struck up the music with the ease and perfection of an expert. He played several tunes going from "Nellie Gray" and "Comin' thru the Rye" to dance tunes like "A Kansas Traveler" and "Irish Washerwoman" to other waltzes, two-steps and schottisches with such perfect rhythm and timing that the audience was delighted. They listened quietly, carried away by the charm of the music as Anson's fingers flew over the strings and his arm moved with lightning speed.

Anson paused at the end of a peppy square dance tune and Dickson exclaimed with enthusiasm, "You're just the man we need to play for us so we could have regular dances; we've got a fine hall over the store but it is always so hard to find a fiddler. Why don't you stay over here a few days and play for the dance Friday night. I know we can get up a good crowd and make it worth while for you."

"Oh, I suppose I could," Anson said giving the violin to Will, "I guess we ain't in such a hurry to get started again and there is nothing I like better than playing for a dance."

"You know you're welcome to stay as long as you want," Henry replied, "And now you town folks advertise this so we have a good crowd."

"We sure will and we'll be expecting you Friday night, Deo," Dickson declared.

"I'll be here," Anson assured him with a smile and the two men left.

On Friday night the Deos and Nickersons drove to town in the lumber wagon where they found that a large crowd had already assembled for the dance, evidence that the advertising had been well done. Young and old and middle aged turned out from country and town alike and filled the hall. Never had the people enjoyed such a fine time since the Fourth of July when Frank Hook played for his bowery dance; he was now living farther out in the country and could never be induced to play except on rare occasions.

When, at two o'clock, Anson laid his violin away in the box the crowd knew that their good time was at an end. Dickson took up a collection and gave Anson the entire amount of ten dollars for his work which was the easiest money he could ever make since playing his violin was merely a pleasant pastime for him.

By this time everyone knew where the Does had come from and where they were going but they tried to coax them into staying a while so Anson could play for their dances. Dickson was deeply interested in the idea.

"Can't we make some kind of a deal?" he asked Anson, the next Saturday night as he gave Anson his change in payment for a plug of tobacco. "Here

I've got a big hall made a purpose for this kind of entertainment, you can furnish the music, the people like to dance, so we ought to go into the business together. Why don't you stay through the winter. We can have a dance every week and I'll give you half the money we take in for your share. What do you think of that?"

It sounded pretty good to Anson, there was plenty of time to go to Yank-ton the next spring, so he told the storekeeper to give him a couple of days to think it over. What he really meant was that he wished to talk it over with his wife.

"You aren't giving up the trip are you?" she asked in surprise. "I thought you were so anxious to go."

"Of course, I am" he insisted. "But I can make some easy money this winter; it might not be so easy as we think, getting out there just as cold weather is setting in. There might not be so much work at that time of year either, and we can get along very well here. Don't you like the idea?"

"I love it!" she answered honestly and fervently. "But I don't want to influence you one way or another. If you can find a place for us to live I'll set up housekeeping so quick you won't have time to change your mind."

Anson went to town on Monday and Dickson received his decision, with approbation. Carpenter did not share his partner's interest in dances, but being a broad minded person, did not interfere for he had that rare wisdom of not caring what others did so long as they not inflict their ideas on him. Without doubt, this was the secret of their success as congenial partners.

Anson was anxious to find a house at once and Dickson suggested that he might be able to rent Mandy's house as it had been standing empty since she moved away. Having seen Mandy, Anson found that she was indeed glad to rent the house to him, so the Deos moved into Hook's Point, guided by Fate that decided the future for people so easily, quickly and sometimes strangely.

The dances continued through the winter as a popular diversion; the hall was always crowded unless the weather was severely cold and stormy. The proceeds from the dances kept the family comfortably and being an ambitious person, Anson worked in the timber cutting his firewood, selling some of the surplus, and working at anything that would bring in some extra money. He liked the town, the people liked him and his family, and without realizing it, was becoming pleasantly attached to the place.

The two years that Dickson farmed Mandy's place had brought him more grief than gain. Hard luck seemed to haunt him and disgusted, he did not rent the farm again for the next year. Working in the store did not appeal to him anymore either so after some deliberation he decided to sell his interest in the store to Carpenter, and move his family away in the hope that a new location would bring him success or at least more desirable work.

Mandy was a little homesick for her old home in which she had lived for many years, and which was full of memories and associations both sad and happy so she make plans to return in the spring, selling her five acres of land near the McKinney school, to Ike Hyatt.

This made it necessary for the Deo family to find another place to live until the weather turned warm and they could continue their interrupted journey. But as they thought of the long trip and started making some plans again, they discovered that the trip had lost its first attraction. This

little town with its friendly countryside seemed like home to them and they were more reluctant to leave it than they had been to make the break from their old home in Clinton.

Anson had talked to Frank Hook and learned a great deal about the west; Frank thought it was a good country but he liked Iowa a little better; however, he did not attempt to influence Anson either way. After several family discussions, Anson finally suggested that they buy Dickson's house and settle down there. Mary Deo tried not to appear too eager, but Anson could detect her desire to stay despite her efforts to conceal it, so in a generous manner told her he thought they might as well since she wanted to, and she diplomatically pretended that she was responsible for his decision but each was careful never to chide the other.

Anson bought the Dickson house immediately, moved his family there and became one of the prominent citizens of the village.

The romance of Nettie Cleveland and Brain Hakes, an established fact since their first meeting, had continued happily through the spelling bees, singing schools and other social affairs, finally culminating in their marriage that spring. The couple built a house on a farm opposite Grandpa Cleveland's house and set up housekeeping with all the joyous anticipation common to newly weds.

Frank and Mary Jane Layton moved out of the log cabin back of Wes McKinney's house and took up a homestead on 40 acres of land a mile south and two miles east of Hook's Point. They got the land for \$1.25 per acre but money was scarce and some buildings had to be provided so it was a serious business requiring the most rigid economy and sacrifice to attempt to buy and pay for the place. However, the boys were growing into husky lads and before long would be able to help with the work and needed some chores and responsibilities of their own. It was eight years old the 24th of May, Tressie would be seven in September and Wid would be five in December.

Frank continued with his painting and carpentering trade and in spare time broke up some of the prairie sod, planting it to corn, and Mary tended her garden. Not all of the ground was tillable since low places filled with water when it rained and crops drowned out at the first downpour. The house was small, consisting of two rooms, and the barn was barely large enough to shelter the team and two cows with a corner reserved for the hogs, but it was a beginning and things came slowly, every little gain was well earned and thoroughly appreciated.

Mandy moved her family back into the brick house with the lean-to kitchen, and set her furniture in its old familiar places. She was delighted to be back in her old home and declared she would never move again. Her family was growing up, relieving her of many responsibilities and was a constant source of satisfaction and comfort to her. Elizabeth was an attractive young lady of nineteen years with a gay, sunny disposition and Hannah was busy with her three children who enjoyed most of all going over to Grandma's house where they were always welcome, begging cookies and doughnuts with childish liberty.

Chapter Fifteen

Boy's Life at Hook's Point

Will Hook was now sixteen years old, a broadshouldered lad, the image of his father and Finch was thirteen, slender and fair, but wiry and strong. The boys were willing and able to farm the place for Mandy so she did not have to depend on renting it anymore. Finch and Claude Deo became very good friends, and living within a few rods of each other's homes, were together much of the time. They played together and worked together at any odd jobs they could get whereby they might earn some money.

One day the boys saw a large herd of cattle approaching from the south and watched them as they came up the road and halted in the street. The herder rode his horse over to the boys and asked them how far it was to the crossing of the Des Moines River. He was a big, red faced, bewhiskered, rough looking man, but clean and well dressed and rode a good horse.

"It's about a mile and a half to the river. Are you going far?" Finch asked.

"Yes, I'm taking these cattle to Estherville where they are to stay all summer. I've come about 40 miles with them now and I'm suppose to meet some other fellows across the river who will help me drive them the rest of the trip. How is the trail down to the river, could I follow it easy with the cattle?"

"It's not so good, because there is timber along the way and it might be hard to keep the cattle from straggling out into it," explained the boy.

"Maybe I ought to have someone to help me down to the river," the driver said thoughtfully as he looked at his watch. "It's three o'clock now and I don't want to be out in the timber after dark with these critters, I never could drive them in strange country. I wonder if you boys would like to help me?"

Finch considered this a moment, then said, "Sure, I will help you but I think we need Claude too, those cattle might be hard to handle."

"I'm not doing anything else so I might as well," Claude agreed. "We won't be gone very long and it will be easier with two of us to keep them in line."

"All right, let's get started," said the herder as he cracked his big blacksnake over the backs of the cattle and started them in the direction of the river. The cattle followed the road closely where there was a rail fence but after a time there was only a crooked wagon road that meandered along through the timber and the cattle began to drift from the main herd and into the brush and timber. The boys ran after them constantly in an effort to keep them together. They made slow progress and it was five o'clock when they reached the river. The water was deep and the river looked formidable to the man with his unmanageable cattle.

"I'm afraid I will have some trouble getting them across alone and taking them the rest of the way," the man said as he stopped to look over the situation; the rapidly flowing river and the brush covered hill beyond. "I still have about two miles to go according to the directions my boss gave me. Would you go on the rest of the way with me, boys?"

Finch and Claude were not greatly interested in the job. It had been a hard trip this far and probably wouldn't be any easier on the other side, also their bare feet were becoming a little sensitive to the stones and sticks they had tramped over while driving the cattle. But they felt sorry for the stranger for they realized he could hardly manage the cattle alone in strange country while they knew it well. So they kindly consented to go.

Driving the cattle into the river, they swam along slowly in the direction of the opposite shore which was a relief to the drivers who feared they might scatter badly. There was a ferry boat, a flat surfaced affair tied to a tree on which the man and boys cross leading the horse behind. The ferry, guided by a wire stretched between the banks of the river, was pushed along by means of a long pole and thus the crossing was safely made and the remainder of the trip was begun. The sun was sinking rapidly over the rim of the western hills and the trees cast long shadows on the ground.

For a quarter of a mile the cattle followed the road, then they reached thick timber where there was nothing but poor trails and the trouble began. The cattle scattered in the brush and it was difficult to find them in the gathering darkness. The boys were running constantly as they tried to keep the cattle together and the herder tried to keep them moving along toward their destination. Time dragged as the weary boys continued to work faithfully becoming more tired and hungry as the moments passed. The herder also was losing his patience and rode his horse furiously in pursuit of the animals. Finally, at ten o'clock they arrived at the house where the other men were waiting. Here the boys and the driver sat down to a poorly cooked supper of bread, meat and gravy, not very appetizing, but they were so nearly famished they were glad to eat and satisfy their hunger. When they had finished eating the boys remarked that they must start for home.

"Well, I reckon I'd better pay you boys for your work," the herder said in his most bland and friendly manner. "I never could have done it alone, so here is fifty cents apiece for you."

Finch and Claude looked at each other in consternation and at the herder in disgust. They were completely worn out from the hard work, their feet were sore and bruised, and they were a long way from home.

"Do you really have the brass to offer us only fifty cents apiece for what we did for you?" Claude asked scornfully.

"Look here, mister," Finch said with blazing eyes before the man could answer, "You think you can take advantage of a couple of boys but you won't get by with it. We want three dollars apiece for helping you and if you don't pay it we will tell our folks and get some officers down here. I thought you were a white man when we took this job and you'd better pay up unless you want some trouble."

"No, no, I don't want any trouble," the man insisted, apparently surprised at the boys' anger. "That's a lot of money but I'll pay you rather than argue. The boss will have a fit but I'm too tired to care. I've had enough of this business myself. Next time he can get somebody else to drive his cattle. Here's your money, you little robbers." He dug a roll of bills out of his pocket and gave each of the boys three dollars.

"Thank you, sir," said both of the boys and they made a quick start for home.

The sky was full of stars but the moon was merely a sliver in the east so there was little light to help the boys find their way in the darkness. When they reached the river they found that someone else had crossed on the ferry-boat and it was now on the other side of the river. They remembered seeing a flat boat a few rods down the river when they crossed the afternoon so the only thing to do was to try to cross on it. Would this ill fated trip ever end?

Claude untied the boat from its mooring while Finch found a long pole with which they could propel and guide it across the river. The boys pushed out from shore into the dark, deep water and got along nicely until they reached the middle of the stream. Here the boat got caught in a whirlpool in the current that caused the boat to turn dizzily and lose its course. The boys were frightened, for in the darkness it was impossible to see where they were going, and they were afraid they would lose their balance on the unsteady boat. Fortunately, they managed to get past the whirlpool quickly and were able to make the rest of the trip without further mishap.

They tied the flatboat securely to a tree along the bank, and thankful that the worst part of the return trip was over, continued on their way. When they arrived home their parents were anxiously waiting for them, thinking something dreadful must have happened. They explained their absence in as few words as possible and tumbled into bed, positive that never again would they have to work so hard for three dollars.

In these days boys had to work hard, but they had many hours to spend as they wished and enjoyed them to the fullest. Although they had to furnish their own entertainment they never failed to have a good time, for their minds were as active as their bodies and some of their ideas were wild enough to distress any parents.

Finch liked to visit with his old schoolmates, the Jakeway boys who lived along the river bottom at the foot of the hill northwest of the McKinney school. One day the boys, Eke, File, Teed and Dorias Jakeway and Finch were playing ball out in the pasture when the idea of hitching the boys pet calf to a cart and driving it, popped into their minds. The calf was very gentle and the boys often rode it so they thought it would be easy to drive it like the farmers drove their oxen.

"Let's hitch Eke with the calf," Teed suggested, "he can help hold it if it starts to run."

"All right," said Eke. "I'm not afraid to do it. But how are we going to fix the harness?"

"Oh, you won't need much harness," explained Finch. "We'll put a halter on the calf and tie it to the neckyoke and then tie some ropes from the neckyoke to the double tree. We can tie a line around you so you can hold up your end of the neckyoke and help guide the calf. This sure will be fun? and he quickly hitched up the "team" talking excitedly as he worked.

In a few moments they were ready to start and it was the queerest looking outfit the boys had ever seen. Dorias climbed into the small seat of the two-wheeled cart, took the lines and yelled, "Giddap!!" Eke and the calf started out slowly but after taking a few steps the calf suddenly realized he was mixed up in some strange affair and letting out a terrified bawl broke into a run. Eke ran as fast as he could trying to keep up and guide the calf for Dorias' hold on the lines had little effect on the halter. The boys shouted excitedly and the calf continued to bellow its protests at such treat-

ment.

Mrs. Jakeway hearing the noise, came out of the house to investigate and when she saw the boys in their precarious situation, the calf kicking up its heels and bawling, and the other boys running around shouting like wild Indians she was terrified and screamed to them to stop. But the boys were having the time of their lives; this was as good as a circus and they having no realization of fear, could not give up their glorious adventure yet.

"Don't worry, Mother," yelled File trying to dispel her fears, "Eke will hold him level."

Mrs. Jakeway was not convinced but there was nothing she could do but stand and watch them, afraid to look and reluctant to leave, so she merely stood there and wrung her hands in desperation. Finally the calf tired of running and walked meekly along beside Eke, as the boys returned to the barnyard and unhitched it. The mother went back to her housework thankful to a kind Fate that seems to watch over mischievous boys.

Another afternoon Will and Finch went over to Jonathon Milburn's home to visit Bill and Eb Milburn who lived a mile west and a half mile south of town. A neighbor boy Sam Booker joined the group and after visiting a while they thought it was time to do something exciting. Finch told them about the fun he had had with the Jakeway boys and they all seized the idea promptly.

"We could hitch two of our calves to that little wagon we use to haul wood up from the timber," Bill said daringly.

"I don't think we ought to," Eb remonstrated dutifully, "you know father told us never to hitch them when he was gone."

"He won't ever know about it," declared Bill. "He won't be back for a long time 'cause he just left and you know he will stay and talk a while with Hewitt Ross. That's nothing to hitch up a couple of calves, it's as easy as driving oxen and everybody does that. Come on, let's have some fun."

The temptation was irresistible for the boys as well as they caught the calves and put the yoke on them like they had seen their father yoke oxen and started to drive them. However, the calves would not stay in place but kept swinging out as there were no tugs to hold them in position and the calves did not know what was expected of them.

"Let's tie their tails together," suggested Sam, "then they will walk along like they are suppose to."

This was carrying the prank to extremes but they had gone too far now to give it up so Bill and Finch tied their tails together and they were going along very successfully when Will happened to look across the field and see Mr. Milburn returning sooner than they had expected.

"Here comes your Pa," he yelled excitedly.

This announcement electrified the boys into instant action. They unyoked the calves quickly and turned them loose but in their haste and excitement they forgot to untie the tails and when they noticed this fact the calves were tearing around so madly there was no chance of getting it done.

It was an annoying yet comical spectacle that confronted Mr. Milburn when he arrived. The boys were a scared, helpless and sheepish looking group as

they looked first at Mr. Milburn and then at the calves who were wildly bellowing and jumping around trying to get away from each other, but couldn't and each yank on their tails increased their pain and anger. Finally the end of one calf's tail was pulled off, and away both of them ran at top speed to the safety of the far corner of the pasture.

Johnathon knew by the stricken looks on the boy's faces that they were being severely punished by their guilty consciences, and feeling sure they would never disobey again, merely said gently though seriously, "Now boys, don't you think you should cut some wood and fill the woodbox for Alice?"

"Yes, certainly father, we'll do it right away," they said in unison, starting at once to the woodpile.

The other boys went home, almost weak with relief that the escapade had resulted in no worse consequences.

Johnathon Milburn had tried to be both father and mother to his family since the death of his wife seven years previously. At that time Eb was two years old, Alice four, Bill 12, Walter 14 and Joe was 16. Walter had helped his father all he could and kept the promise made to his mother before she died. She had never been very well and in this last illness when she felt how sick she was and that he would have to help his father care for the younger children, because Joe, the oldest and apparently strong and healthy would not live long; she had had a dream and had seen two coffins in the sky, hers and Joes.

They were southern people and inclined to be a trifle superstitious although they would not readily admit it to others. However, the dream came true since Joe died three weeks later, of pneumonia and Walter was then the oldest in the family and helped raised the other children.

It was a difficult time for all of them. When Alice was only five years old she stood on a chair and mixed biscuits because, being southern people, they liked their hot biscuits once or twice every day.

One time when Alice was ten and Eb was eight years old the Indians came while they were home alone. They had a fierce dog, named "Bull", to protect them but he was tied up. The Indians came as far as the gate and old Bull was pulling angrily on his rope. Alice told them she would turn the dog loose if they came any closer, so they left but when the men returned from the timber where they had been working they found two very frightened youngsters.

Johnathon had a fair education, having taught Grammar at an Academy before leaving Tennessee and so taught his own children many of their lessons. He and the children set trees in the yard of the home and all cooperated to make the place pleasant.

Aunt Margaret Deck lived nearby and often went over to help with the work and the management of the home, so in spite of difficulties the family grew up and learned to be useful, self reliant people.

Ed Milburn and Sam Booker being the same age - ten years old - were very close friends. Both had the same venturesome, daring spirit and both liked best to roam in the woods, shooting at sparrows with their sling shots and roaming down along the river where they fished and explored old caves in the hillsides.

A band of Indians was camping on the river banks on the Sconsin place where the stage station was formerly located. The boys were delighted when they saw their tepees scattered close to the river. Their parents had warned the boys to stay away from the Indian camps, because the white people could not exactly feel that the red men could be trusted and preferred to play safe. But the boys did not have the adult's sense of fear or realization of danger. In innocence they instinctively trusted everyone, even an Indian, when they were in a particularly brave mood.

"Shall we go and visit the camp?" Eb asked with an expectant sparkle in his eyes.

"I don't think we ought to, Eb; my folks wouldn't like it," Sam replied wistfully. "Maybe these Indians aren't friendly either."

"Aw, don't be a 'fraidy-cat. They won't hurt us. Shucks, we won't bother 'em any. Can't we just look around at their old wigwams?"

"I s'pose we can. I s'pose we could outrun them, don't you?" Sam considered as his resolve weakened.

"I ain't afraid," declared Eb bravely. "Come along and see what is in this nearest tepee. All the men are probably out hunting or roaming around at this time of day. I see a bunch of squaws over there, looks like they are cooking something. I'm going to look inside that tepee."

"I believe I'll wait here so if anyone comes I can warn you," Sam said nervously.

"Now, Sam, you want to see what's inside, don't you?" Eb asked persuasively. "Maybe they have some treasures, like a bow and arrow or a hatchet made out of a white rock or a tiny canoe or just lots of things." "Well, go ahead and look," Sam urged, sitting down on a convenient stump.

Eb regarded Sam in surprise and continued trying to persuade him.

"Sam," he said slowly and seriously, "You wouldn't like it if I saw a lot of pretty and valuable things and you didn't get to, would you? We always do things together, don't we? You're just as brave as I am, ain't you? Come on, let's lift up the flap and peek in." Not for the world would Eb let on that he was just a little bit afraid to go alone and was depending on Sam to uphold his courage--but he was.

"Oh, all right," Sam finally relented. "but remember, it was your idea."

Silently, in a crouching movement, like two little Indians themselves, the boys tip-toed up to the tepee and cautiously lifted the flap on the side and looked in. To their amazement, a big powerfully built Indian was sitting cross-legged on the dirt floor cleaning his gun. Looking up with a startled expression the Indian laid his gun down and in a low, guttural voice, said "Puckachee!" which meant "Get out!"

Like two frightened deer the boys turned and fled toward Sconsin's buildings hardly daring to look back to see if they were being pursued, never stopping until they had reached the safety of the barn. Gasping for breath from their speedy flight, the boys peeked around the corner of the barn but no angry Indian was trailing them. Now that they were safe, both quickly regained confidence.

"What did you run so fast for, Sam?" asked Eb.

"I was following you, you're the leader, ain't you?"

"There wasn't anything in there to look at anyway, no use to hang around there. What shall we do now," Eb asked, anxious to change the subject. "It's too early to go home. Shall we go swimming?"

"Suits me all right. We can go up to that shallow, sandy place."

The boys followed the path along the river a short distance undressed behind some bushes and plunged into the stream. Both were good swimmers but they did not venture too far out in the deep water. After spending a half hour in the water the shadows were beginning to lengthen and they knew it was time to start home for they had about two miles to walk. As they were putting on their clothes, Sam's sharp eyes noticed that the river bank seemed to open like the mouth of a cave behind the thickest bushes.

"This looks like a cave where we could do some exploring, Sam" Eb cried excitedly, peering into the dark den. "Maybe this was a hideout where horse thieves used to hide away from the officers."

It was dark as they entered the cave but after their eyes had become accustomed to the darkness they were surprised to find that it was not a small cave as they had expected, but a larger excavation about 16 feet square and higher than a man's head. Some pieces of leather, an old shirt and some cooking utensils, an iron skillet and a kettle were lying in a corner partly covered with dirt.

"What do you suppose this was made for?" asked Sam curiously.

"Don't know for sure but it might be the place where horse thieves hid their horses years ago. I've heard father tell how the rustlers used to ride the horses down to the river, then they always disappeared and no one could find where -- Ouch!" Eb cried painfully, stopping suddenly.

"What's the matter?" Sam asked frightened.

"I stubbed my toe on something here on the ground" Eb cried groaning and holding his foot as he sat down.

"What was it?" "A rock?"

"I don't know, it was right here," Eb replied and started digging around, suddenly holding up something he had dislodged from the ground. "Here it is, and look, it's a horse shoe," he shouted triumphantly, jumping around, forgetting all about his injured toe. "I was right! This is where the rustlers hid their horses. Gosh, we sure stumbled onto something."

"Let's go wash the mud off in the river," Sam suggested.

"Won't the other boys be sorry they wasn't along so they could have helped discover it?" Eb asked enthusiastically.

"They sure will and I think they would have liked to look in the Indian's tepee too," Sam said with a sly grin at Eb, but Eb pretended not to notice. "We'll have some good stories to tell about Indians and rustlers."

"You can leave the Indians out, Sam, because you know our folks will give us the dickens if they find out about it."

"That's true, we'd better not tell that one. Are you ready to go home now? Let's go through Stringtown, I'm awful hungry and maybe Dr. Stuart will give us some of those good apples from his orchard if we stop for a drink. We can tell him about the cave too, maybe he remembers about the horse thieves."

The boys walked rapidly along the dusty road, their bare feet making deep tracks; life was sweet to them and they swung happily along, full of the pleasure of carefree, boyhood days.

When winter came the boys exchanged their summer sports for coasting down the hills on their homemade sleds and skating on the ponds and rivers. Their energy was boundless and must be expended in fun when time permitted.

Will Hook was too busy most of the time with his work to engage in the boys' frolics. He was trying to build up a small herd of cattle. Grandfather Ike Bell, who with Mrs. Bell, were retired residents of Hook's Point, told Will that young Ike Bell had a calf for sale so Will and Finch hitched the team to the sled and drove to Ike's place on the west side of Des Moines River. Here they learned from Mrs. Bell that Ike was not at home since he had gone across the river to dig out a fox den. The boys crossed the river, tied the team to a tree and went up the river toward the place where Ike was suppose to be.

They noticed a foamy place ahead of them but it appeared to be only a crust of snow on the ice so they did not think of walking around it. Without warning Will dropped through the rotten ice into the river. Finch tried to help him out but this proved too dangerous because the ice was not solid around the edge and he was likely to break through also. The water had splashed up on him so he was wet too and the frantic boys had to think fast to find a way out of their predicament.

"Get a long pole out of that pile over there, Finch", Will ordered. "But hurry, this heavy coat will hold me up for a while but I don't know how long."

When Finch returned with the pole he pushed one end over to Will then put all his weight on the other end to hold it steady while Will managed to climb out on the solid ice. Both boys were wet and cold and the most important thing now was to get home as fast as possible. They ran back to their team, then led them over to the sawmill Evans and Frank Hook were operating nearby. Luckily, Claude Deo was working there that day so they told Claude to drive the team home and they would walk as they would not freeze so much that way. The boys walked and ran as fast as they could, taking a short cut across the timber but it was a long mile to the unfortunate boys. When they got home Mandy was frightened half out of her wits by their bedraggled appearance.

"Now, what happened?" she cried in distress.

"Aw, I just fell in the river," Will explained through chattering teeth. "I'm all right now, but how are we going to get these clothes off? They are stiff as a board and we can't just stand here until they thaw out."

"Oh, dear, I don't know. How did you happen to fall in anyway, isn't the ice safe?" she asked as she tried to help pull off their clothes. The frozen garments cracked as they worked with them and finally some of them came off.

"I think there was a whirlpool in that spot and the water foamed up and froze so it looked like snow. We sure were lucky to get out as easily as we did. If it hadn't been for this heavy coat I don't believe I could have kept afloat. These shoes sure are in a nice mess", Frank said as he tugged at them.

Finch's clothes were not so wet so they came off easier. Mandy brought in her two wash tubs, filled them with warm water and made the boys take a bath and go to bed.

"I'll get Claude to do your chores," she said as she piled warm comforts on their bed. Will insisted he was all right and able to do them but she made him stay in bed. "I don't want you to get pneumonia," she explained, "I'll let you get up and eat supper then back to bed you will have to go."

The boys grumbled but the bed felt delightfully warm and comfortable so they obeyed. Next morning they got up feeling fine and Mandy was relieved. Will was still determined to buy the calf if he could, so he started out again. This time he found Ike Bell at home, bought the calf and hauled it home in his sled.

The remainder of the winter passed uneventfully except for the joke Uncle Will Hook pulled on himself. While at prayer meeting one evening he was praying for many good things for himself and everyone else. "Oh, Lord, send us a barrel of flour and a barrel of sugar, and a barrel of pepper --" then stopped in confusion before he corrected his error thus, "Oh, Lord, no. That's too much pepper."

For many years the people had not been molested by the claims of the Riverland Company and the subject was seldom discussed among the settlers although the old resentment still smoldered in the minds of those who had lived there during the early days of the difficulties. However, as long as the Riverland claims were upheld there was bound to be an occasional dispute.

Anson Deo was elected constable in 1872 and being unacquainted with the situation encountered some of these difficulties. A family had been squatting on some Riverland property according to the claims of the company. An official of the company sent orders to Anson that he should evict the family. Naturally, Anson felt it was his duty as constable to carry out the orders, whether he liked the idea or not, but he might have hesitated if he had understood, or been aware, of the bitterness of the settlers regarding this practice.

A nephew of Anson's, George Cauley, a visitor at the Deo home, went with Anson to the home of the unfortunate family. Against the angry protests of the people, the two men moved their household goods out into the road, but in order to make the eviction legal and establish the rights of the Riverland Company, they had to remain at the house for the required number of hours which they proceeded to do, unaware of the animosity of the other people. Nor did they realize news could travel so fast.

As darkness fell, the officers were surprised to see a group of men approaching on horseback and on foot. Evidently someone had heard the news and spread it well, for approximately a hundred men from all over the country were in the mob. They started moving the furniture back toward the house but Anson drew his gun and told them to stop. The men were angry and determined to carry out their plan, but Anson was just as determined to do his job well. He felt that the law should hold its authority and he refused to leave. Since he represented the law, the men were afraid to push things too far and Anson showed

no signs of weakening. He was tall and broadshouldered and could have thrown most any of the men out bodily, while the gun in his hand never wavered.

When the mob saw they could do nothing about it they gave up the attempt but they loudly discussed the whole unhappy affair at length so Anson realized that the settlers had really suffered an injustice. But having held the fort thus far he would not give in, but refused to have any more to do with it thereafter.

The shifting of people from one business to another made some changes in the town that spring, when Gus Newman sold his blacksmith shop to Olaf Rosen-green, who had come over from Sweden in 1868, staying with relatives and working at various jobs until he became interested in smithing. Newman began farming and Olaf took over the shop. John Berggren began making wagons in conjunction with Olaf and together they constructed wagons, as well as doing other work, such as sharpening farm implements, shoeing horses and repairing vehicles. John bought Ike Bell's house for his family and Olaf engaged a room at Bowman's hotel.

The two men added much to the convenience of the community, for they were experts in their work; farmers could get their repair work done quickly when they were busy with field work and needed a plow lay sharpened or some wooden pieces fixed; something was always breaking when they plowed the tough prairie sod or broke up a patch of timber land that still was full of stumps and tree roots.

John's wagon boxes were a work of art for he made them with the same perfection that he did a piece of furniture, his spare time hobby. He used only choice pieces of lumber, fitting them with precision, so they were a tremendous improvement over the rough, cumbersome boxes in which the pioneers had brought their families to the new country. Olaf put the iron work on, then John painted them green and every farmer longed to own one, for a good wagon and box was one of the first essentials on every farm, since it served so many purposes.

Anson realized that the town was growing rapidly and he believed there might be enough business for another hotel, also it would fit in nicely with his dance business. He hired Erastus Carpenter and Frank Layton to build a 16 x 24 foot wing onto the grocery store along the north side having two big windows that gave passerbys a good view of the interior. Here Mary Deo served meals and lunches to the patrons of dance hall in friendly competition with Mrs. Bowman.

Anson asked Frank to paint a sign for him so he made one in the shape of an oval three feet long and two feet wide. The words "Hook's Point" were painted in red in fancy, but distinct size, and the sign was attached to a cedar post and set by the hotel.

Frank still enjoyed this work more than farming although he did that too. His family required all the money he could make and there was the debt on the land that diminished slowly in spite of earnest efforts. Another daughter, Eva Mae, was born on September 17 of that year of 1872, increasing his responsibilities and his pride in his family.

Hook's Point was a fine, prosperous pioneer town, with a great future if it could only get a railroad built through there but it got no farther than an occasional discussion. Until the old survey of the railroad company expired, another could not be made so the people resigned themselves to patient waiting. But this town would be ready for it when it came. At night when all the lamps were lighted in the stores and houses it looked like a very flourishing town to

those older residents who remembered it when Isaac Hook had the only store there and the old trail did not pass through town but skirted the east end of the ravine.

Now the bridge was well worn from the numerous vehicles, horses and people, who had crossed it since it was built and now the rattle of the planks was a common and frequent sound as more people crossed it in an evening than did when it was new. There were hitching posts along both sides of the street and a wide board walk extended from Deo's house to the corner grocery store, an item of elegance when the mud was ankle deep in the street. Truly, this was progress!

Chapter Sixteen

A Husking Bee

Along with the dances, sleigh rides, hay rides, spelling bees, and singing schools, the form of entertainment for young people, the one that created the most interest and fun, was the husking bee in the fall. It was customary to snap the corn in the field and haul it to the crib in wagons where it was dumped on the group in piles and later husked.

The type of corn planted yielded many red ears of corn and the object of the husking bee was that every time a young man found a red ear of corn he was privileged to kiss any girl he chose. It was a golden opportunity and the reward was certainly worth the effort in those days when courting was a very well guarded affair, and it was considered most improper for a couple to indulge in kissing at least until they were engaged.

Perhaps the girls enjoyed the prospect of a kiss as much as the boys, but they were very shy and evasive when they were asked to reward a young man for his earnest efforts. But their reluctance did not fool the young men and after much maidenly remonstrance they sweetly consented with all the coyness of maidens since time immemorial.

A husking bee made a beautiful country picture. Early in the fall the harvest moon shone benignly down upon the country side with all its soft golden light, shrouding the world in a soft radiance, making objects stand out obscurely in the pale glow, their rough, plain everyday appearance softened into beautiful lines. Then it seemed that a sweet benediction lay over the world as the harvest was reaped and stored away.

It was at a husking bee at the home of Dr. Stuart that a delightful romance was begun, a romance that was truly typical of all the old-fashioned charm and loveliness of pioneer days. Eva Stuart, now past 16 years of age, entertained at her first real party one warm evening in late September. All the young folks of the neighborhood were there, several of the Whitakers, the Paul boys, Sconsins, Gleasons, Hooks, Olaf Rosengreen, Claude Deo, the Milburn boys and several others.

Eva was a charming hostess for she had a sweet, friendly manner and magnetic personality and the pleasure of her first party brought a sparkle to her eyes and a flush to her cheeks that matched the color of her dress, a pink dimity made with short puffed sleeves trimmed with lace, a basque waist and full hoop skirt. With her brown curls piled high on her head in a very grown-up style, her vivacious manner had yet a touch of girlish innocence and bashfulness that was most charming.

Indeed, any young man would have been attracted by her loveliness but there was one who had long been aware of it and had only been biding his time until she was allowed to entertain at parties as a young lady, and consequently receive the attentions of a young man. Walter Milburn, a tall, handsome young man with dark hair and brown eyes, 22 years old, had come to the party with definite plans of his own. When the husking started he worked fast and finding the coveted ear, he went directly to Eva and bowing said, "Miss Stuart, I have found a red ear of corn as you see. May I be allowed to claim the reward?"

Eva was, to say the least, a bit overcome by the request. Although she had probably expected it might happen that evening, she had not thought about who might make the request and since it was also a new experience to her she

was considerably flustered. Of course, she knew Walter but had never paid any special attention to him, seeing him only as one of the young folks of the community. Dressed in his Sunday best and standing there so handsome, the moonlight revealing the earnest appeal in his face she almost forgot what to say.

"I -- I s'pose so," she stammered, "If you want to."

"I do, very much," he answered then placing his hands on her shoulders lightly, kissed her very gently, very lovingly on the lips, which surprised Eva even more. This gentleman wasn't fooling. He meant business and was really interested in her which was quite a conquest indeed for her first party.

"Thank you, Miss Stuart," Walter said softly and respectfully.

"Oh, you're welcome," Eva replied airily, having recovered her composure, "but my name is Eva, you don't need to call me Miss Stuart."

"I know, but you have such a beautiful dress and look so grown up tonight you awe me just a little with your loveliness."

"Oh, do I really," she asked doubtfully but hopefully. Holding her skirt out at each side with her hands she pirouetted around with an air of childish honesty and pleasure that contrasted strangely with her grown-up appearance. "I made it all by myself and it was a terrible job, I nearly lost by patience many times but I kept at it and finally finished it. I'm glad you like it."

"I certainly do. But I fear I am keeping you from your guests too long, shall we join them now?"

By this time all the boys had found at least one ear of the red corn and had had a hilarious time, so Eva asked all of them to come to the front yard where they might play other games. They formed a circle, and sang and played "Skip-to-my-Lou" and "Farmer-in-the-Dell" until it was refreshment time. Mary Stuart served doughnuts and great mugs of sweet apple cider as well as delicious apples from the orchard, and since no party would be complete without songs the group took seats on the rude benches in the yard and sang "Sweet Evalina", "Comin' Thru the Rye", "Swinging in the Lane", "The Old Hickory Cane", and others, the sweet harmony of their sweet voices blending and carrying far out on the clear air.

All too soon it was time for the party to end, as all parties did at ten o'clock and the guests departed for their homes. Walter lingered until the last and when he was ready to leave he led his horse up to the gate where Eva had been bidding her friends goodnight.

"I'm riding a new horse tonight," Walter explained apparently as a subject for conversation and an excuse for staying. "I just bought him last week."

"He's just beautiful, isn't he?" exclaimed Eva. "Such a smooth, shiny black and he has white feet and a white star in his forehead too. What is his name?"

"I call him Prince. I've always liked that name."

"It sounds very aristocratic and just suits him. Is he gentle?"

"Certainly, just like a kitten. You can pet him, he likes attention."

Eva patted him on his proud arched neck and Prince seemed to enjoy it for he stood quietly, touching her arm gently with his soft nose as if in response to her friendly caress.

"Can he run fast?" asked Eva.

"He goes like the wind and is an easy rider. I've already broken him to drive single. You know, Eva, I'd like very much to take you out riding some time and show you how fast and easily he trots. Maybe I could take you to church Sunday night."

"I'd love to go Walter. I'm sure father will not object."

"All right, I'll be here at seven o'clock, then."

"I'll be ready," Eva promised.

"And you'll wear the pink dress?"

"Surely."

"Very well, goodnight, I enjoyed the party and thanks especially for the kiss." Walter said and mounted his horse.

Eva blushed furiously at the memory of the kiss and with a quick goodnight, turned and walked swiftly toward the house where, in the shadow of a huge walnut tree, she watched Walter until he disappeared in the fading moonlight and the clatter of Prince's hoofs died away in the distance, then she walked slowly and thoughtfully into the house.

When Ed Stuart, now ten years old, learned that Eva was going to Church with Walter Milburn on Sunday night, he suddenly developed a tremendous interest in church and insisted on going along. Eva was exasperated because he was such a mischievous brother and being slightly spoiled, usually got his way.

"You can go with Mother sometime. "Eva told him. "You'll just go to sleep if you do go, you know you always do."

"No, I won't go to sleep and I really want to go. I want to see Eb Milburn, he has a lot of pumpkins over at his place and I want to tell him to bring along a couple to school tomorrow so we can make some Jack-o-lanterns."

"Now that isn't necessary, at all, Ed. And it certainly isn't any reason for going to church. You can wait another day, it's a long time until Halloween and I could tell Walter to tell Eb about it."

"Please Eva," interrupted her mother, "It wouldn't bother any for him to ride along with you. There will be plenty of room, I'm sure, and he can take care of himself."

Eva was not a girl to argue with her mother so dropped the subject, but when it was time to get ready she scrubbed Ed's neck and ears vigorously, made him wash his hands thoroughly, comb his hair, and polish his own shoes. Then she made him dress carefully and insisted on him looking as respectable as possible. All this was very painful to Ed who had a small boy's scorn for

dressing up, but after begging so hard to go along was in no position to remonstrate.

Promptly at seven o'clock Walter arrived. The new buggy shone and the spokes of the wheels twinkled in the last slanting rays of the sunlight. Prince trotted in to the yard, holding his head erect, as if realizing this was a very important occasion in the life of his master and he must do his share. When Walter came to the door, Eva invited him in and placed a chair for him while she went into the other room for a last careful inspection of herself to be sure she looked as nice as possible, then she put on her hat and shawl. Walter was engaged in conversation with the doctor and Mary when she was ready but it was time to leave so they went on their way with the third member of the party strutting along.

During the half mile drive to church Ed entertained them with a small boy's talk of fishworms, Indians, the results of too many green apples and such gruesome things.

"I didn't know you went to church on Sunday night, Ed," Walter said during an unexpected lull in the conversation. "It's nice to see a boy your age so interested in religion."

"I think so too," agreed Eva, "I feel quite sure, Walter, that Ed is going to be a very religious person. In fact I expect he will turn out to be a preacher some day."

"Yeah, like fun," said Ed. "I'm going to be a horse trader, when I grow up".

"I doubt if religoon and horse trading would go very well together," remarked Walter.

"Aw, you're just making fun of me, but that's all right," Ed said. I guess a feller likes to go someplace once in a while even if it is to church."

Walter and Eva laughed at his sober honesty and said no more; Walter tied Prince to the hitching post along with several other rigs, and all went into the building. Ed found his friend Eb Milburn and sat with him through services, Walter and Eva joined the other members of the singing school in the front.

On the way home Ed fell asleep in spite of manly efforts to keep awake and Eva put her arm around him and held him comfortably while he slept.

Walter and Eva went together steadily all through the winter, to church, singing schools, on sleighrides, and to taffy pulls. When the snow was deep and it was easier to travel on horseback, Walter called for Eva on Prince, she mounted behind him and away they went, Prince carrying his burden easily and swiftly.

At heart Eva was an idealist and a poet with a true love and appreciation of all things fine and glorious and beautiful. To her, the world was a wonderful place and she enjoyed the flowers, birds and trees; she spent hours reading poetry and writing it. Walter's constant and devoted attention was a very precious thing to her and she regarded it quite seriously with all her apparent frivolity.

She had some very romantic convictions and she truly believed that every-

one had a soulmate; and if people did not find the right companion and marry them, or if they married someone they did not love more than any other, they would never be happy.

There was no mistaking Walter's intentions, and by the end of the next spring their friendship had advanced to the stage where Eva felt sure Walter would be asking her to marry him most any time. One night in early May when the freshness of spring's new garments was magnificently displayed Walter came to call and declared he did not care to go to church.

"I feel more like just talking tonight so let's walk down the path where we used to go last summer. It won't be dark for an hour yet and it must be pretty there now."

This plan was very agreeable to Eva, so they walked along the path and soon came to the big stump that was large enough for both of them to sit on. The earth was carpeted with green grass and the leaves were nearly full grown on the trees; a crabapple tree had grown up near the stump and it was in full bloom now, resembling a tremendous pink snowball, filling the air with its sweet perfume. Robins and bluebirds fluttered about in the trees, deeply engrossed with the problem of providing for their young and in the depths of the woods a whippoorwill broke the stillness with its sharp call.

"It's beautiful here, isn't it?" asked Eva dreamily.

"Yes," said Walter. "Peaceful and wonderful."

"Wouldn't it be nice if a person's life could always be this way too, full of color and peace and contentment?"

"Mine always will be Eva, no matter where I am so long as you are with me."

"Are you getting poetic too, Walter," Eva asked, in surprise.

"No, I mean it. And that is why I asked you to come here tonight. Eva, we have been good friends for a long time. I don't know for sure how you feel toward me but I have loved you dearly for many months and I am anxious to know if you love me enough to marry me for it would make me very happy."

While Eva was not really surprised at his proposal, she was completely unprepared for the feeling of rapture and indecision and joy that seemed to unfold her.

"I'm -- I'm terribly proud that you asked me Walter," she said hesitantly, "and I do like you very much but I don't exactly know if it is enough or not. I think a man and woman must be very sure about each other because it would be awful to find out you weren't happy together after you were married, wouldn't it?"

"I suppose so -- but there isn't anyone else, is there?" asked Walter, a terrible thought forming in his mind.

"No, there isn't anyone else. In fact, I feel quite sure you are the only one I could ever love."

Remember that night at the husking bee when I kissed you?"

"I'll never forget that."

"I loved you then and I hardly dared hope you would ever care for me, but I believe you do now and I'm sure we would be very happy."

"Yes, I'm sure we would too and yet it seems like I am rather young to get married. I have been thinking I would like to teach school or do something before I get married and teaching is about the only thing I could do."

"This is the first time I ever heard about that, but if you really want to, you should try it, otherwise you would always wish you had. But, at least you will promise to marry me after you have taught a while, won't you, so I can have that much to plan on while I am waiting for you to settle down?"

"Yes, Walter, I'd love to marry you someday, but of course, you will have to ask father. He's very particular about that. I think he likes to feel that he rules his family and wants them to be obedient right up to the time they get married but there never was a kinder father so I suppose we shouldn't object to humoring him."

"It would be terribly embarrassing, though, if he refused," said Walter, with a contemplative chuckle. "However, if he didn't like me he surely would have kicked me out long ago, I feel certain of that, and yet, you can never tell."

"Oh, don't cross any bridges until you get to them. You won't be asking for a while. I want to go to Fort Dodge to write the two examinations that I didn't pass the last time and there will be plenty of time to ask father's permission when I decide to quit teaching."

"When are you going and how are you going?" Walter inquired innocently.

"I must go a week from Thursday and well--I hadn't quite figured out how I would get there but if most anyone offered to take me, I suspect I would accept the offer."

"And I'm foolish enough to offer to take you when I know it will be the means of postponing our marriage for several months," remarked Walter. "I also know you very well so I realize if I don't take you, you will find some other way to get there and I may as well have that much pleasure."

"You're a dear person and I appreciate it. It is a long trip to Fort Dodge though, almost 30 miles. How do you think Prince will like that?"

"He won't mind. He can make that in six or seven hours. If we start early we will be there by noon. It won't take long to write the examinations, will it, so we can get home by nine or ten o'clock."

"I should write them in two hours if they aren't too hard and I have to make up too many answers."

"Wouldn't it be grand if you did fail them again?" Walter teased.

"Walter! Eva exclaimed horrified. "Such a person; and here I am considering marrying you."

"I was only teasing you and since you won't marry me can't you sing me a song to cheer me up?"

"I'd love too. What shall I sing?"

"Something lively, like Swinging in the Lane."

"We'll sing it on the way to the house. It's getting dark and chilly,"

Hand in hand they walked slowly along in the gathering twilight and Eva sang the words as Walter hummed the tune. Walter's favorite song was "Sweet Evaline" which they always sang together; tonight it seemed to have a new, fuller meaning to him and when they had finished the song he took her in his arms and kissed her as on that night of the husking bee and Eva felt sure that no other girl in all the world could be as happy and fortunate as she.

Walter and Eva left Hook's Point at Six o'clock in the morning and Eva was definitely more interested in the gay time they would have all day than in the business end of the trip. She reminded Walter of a girl going to a celebration instead of a young lady intent on launching a career and told her so with a wise smile. She laughed merrily and replied.

"Sure, I am all excited about going, I've never been to Fort Dodge before and I think it is only wise to mix business and pleasure and get all I can out of it."

"It would be my greatest pleasure to ruin your business, if I only knew how. Wouldn't this be a grand time for a wedding on such a nice June day?"

"I think June weddings are just grand -- for anyone interested," Eva answered gaily. "I suppose if you met Hewitt Ross along the road you would ask him to get off his horse and marry us right out here on the prairie like he did that Lakeskillet couple, wouldn't you?"

"Oh, no, I was just teasing you. I want you to teach school for after a siege of that, I think you will be perfectly contented to get married and have a home of your own."

"Do you have one in mind?" asked Eva.

"Certainly. There are 80 acres about two miles east of town that I would buy and put up some buildings there. I'd build a three room house and a small barn, hog-house and chicken house, put a rail fence around it and work hard to make you happy."

They talked on about potential plans, not that they would use them soon as Eva said, but they would keep and be ready for use. The miles slipped by as Prince trotted along, passing out of Stringtown, down the hill to the river, splashing across Haskell's Ford, up the hill on the other side and then across the prairie northwest to Fort Dodge. People living along the trail in the widely scattered farms, stopped to look as the fancy equipage passed by, the shiny buggy with fringed top and the fast horse that went like the wind, governed by the well dressed young man who sat erect beside the pretty lady with such an attentive manner. Every young man's fondest desire and dream revolved around a new buggy, a fine driving horse, and a pretty girl. Walter had all three and was proud and happy.

They arrived at Fort Dodge just as the farmers living near town were unhitching their teams and putting them in the barn for their midday feed. Eva waited in the buggy while Walter unhitched Prince and put him in the livery barn, gave him the oats and corn he had brought along, then they went to a restaurant for their dinner. Since Eva had never been so far away from home before, all the strange sights, the incredible size of the city were like a

new world to her. Wide-eyed she was so busy looking around at everything that only her youthful hunger kept her mind on her dinner long enough to eat it.

Finally it was one o'clock and time for her to go to the courthouse to write her examinations. Walter walked with her to the door and left her with a reassuring smile and warm handclasp, promising to meet her at the same restaurant at four o'clock.

Eva walked soberly into the building, her heart going pitter-patter, for she felt strangely alone and frightened with none of her family or Walter at her side. She found her way to the room where the exams were being written and walked up to the desk where the Superintendent sat.

"How do you do," he spoke kindly with a smile that quieted Eva's nerves a little.

"How do you do," she replied bravely. "I am Miss Eva Stuart from Hook's Point and I would like to take the History and Arithmetic Examinations so I can teach next fall."

"Very well, Miss Stuart, the others are writing the History test now so perhaps you may as well take it first. Here is a list of the questions. You may choose a seat and begin at once."

"Thank you," she said and went to her seat to look over the questions.

Her brow wrinkled in perplexity as she read them.

1. Why did Columbus call the people Indians?
2. Who was the first man to sail around the world?
3. Which colony did John Winthrop govern?
4. Tell the native country of each of the following men and what they did: Balboa, Pizarro, Ponce de Leon, De Soto, Marquette.
5. Who signed the Declaration of Independence and when?

Swiftly she read over the first five questions then paused in distress. Not a single answer came out of the chaos of her thoughts. It was impossible to concentrate in this strange place; she couldn't collect her wandering thoughts. Instead, she visualized a lonely country schoolhouse where she must attempt to pound these dull facts into unresponsive minds along with fractions and parts of speech and spelling; then she looked out of the window where there was freedom and somewhere, back in familiar territory, there was a vision of a little prairie home with a rose bush beside the kitchen door and work she loved to do. Suddenly, an idea popped into her mind and with the impulsiveness of youth, she picked up the questions, paper, ink, goose quill, and her purse and went slowly up to the superintendent's desk.

"I'm sorry, sir," she said faintly, "but I don't seem to feel very well, the long ride or something --. I don't feel like writing them today so maybe I'll come back another time. Thanks for the bother."

"Certainly, Miss Stuart. I'm sorry you don't feel well. Can you go to your home or your friends alone?"

"Oh, yes, I'll be all right," she insisted with such an increase in spirit, marching down the aisle with such speed and animation, that the puzzled man could only sit and watch her dazedly, shaking his head in bewilderment regarding the antics of young ladies.

Eva walked down the courthouse steps and followed the board walk down town. She was a picture of girlish loveliness in her soft blue dress and flower trimmed bonnet tied under her chin with a big bow, as she tripped gaily along the walk or stopped to look at the window displays in the shops.. Walter was frankly surprised when, coming out of a haberdashery store, he saw her looking at the men's suits and hats displayed in the window.

"Why, Eva, he exclaimed, "what's the matter? You couldn't have finished already. Did you come the wrong day or what happened?"

"Walter," she said soberly and wistfully, "I didn't feel very well, so I left."

"You don't look very sick to me," he said unimpressed. "Come on now, 'fess up."

"Well, to tell you the truth, I never saw such hard questions in my life, and I thought if all of them were that hard, I never could pass them anyway, and you would have your mean wish, so I decided it would be better not to write them at all and save all that work and humiliation."

"Are you sure, Eva, that is all you thought?" he asked softly.

She dropped her lashes demurely and a pink flush spread over her cheeks.

"No, it isn't but if I tell you the truth, you won't think I'm immodest, or unladylike, or anything, will you?"

"You know it wouldn't make any difference what you did Eva, I'd think you were the sweetest and the dearest girl in the whole world."

"Well, then," she said resolutely, "I decided I would rather live in that little house you were telling me about on the way up here, than to try to teach a bunch of kids a lot of stuff they don't want to learn anyway."

"Oh, I see, it was a choice of two evils and I was the lesser and as usual I am thankful for any crumbs that you serve. Well, I'm glad that you came to your senses anyway and if weren't on Main Street I'd do a repeat performance of the husking bee kiss, but since I can't I'll postpone it for a short time. And now what do we do -- go home?"

"After a while, I s'pose but we may as well see the town since we are here and Prince hasn't had a very long rest yet."

"He is ready to go again but there isn't any hurry so we can look around."

They walked along the walks to the little park at the west end of town then down along the river bank where the remains of the old steamer Charles Rogers of that riverland company that had sent up stream during the high water to prove the river navigable, lay in a sad state of decay and partly submerged. Then they returned to the restaurant and ate a lunch after which it was time to start home. Prince was rested and eager to go. Eva and

Walter rode in silence for a time each busy with individual thoughts. Suddenly Walter sat up a little straighter and exclaimed, "I just happened to think of it now, I did ruin your business, didn't I? Don't you remember, I said it would be my pleasure to ruin your business on this trip but of course I didn't mean to."

"I'll bet you did have that in mind," said Eva reproachfully.

"No, I didn't and you don't act very disappointed so I suppose I may speak to the doctor Sunday night."

"I suppose you might as well."

"This sure was a long trip for nothing, wasn't it?" chuckled Walter, "or should we say everything?"

"Everything that counts for the most in the world now and always: Love and Home and Happiness." She laid her head against his shoulder and nodded sleepily. The miles sped by as Prince kept up his tireless pace, the sliver of moon in the east cast its dim light over the earth and the trail loomed ahead like a white ribbon in the darkness. Prince needed no one to guide him on the return trip for he knew it well although it was only his second trip and he continued on trustworthy and dependable, when Walter's check on the lines grew lax as he too became tired and drowsy toward the end of the journey.

Walter called the next Sunday evening and was rejoiced to be assured by Dr. and Mrs. Stuart that they would be glad to welcome him into the family circle. After he left, Eva asked, "May I invite him here for Sunday dinner?"

"Certainly," replied her mother, "I suppose you will have many things to talk over and we will all be pleased to have him as our guest."

The next Saturday Eva was busy all day long doing the week-end cleaning and preparing things for dinner the following day. She assumed more than her customary responsibility and her mother was amused at her intense desire to have everything done as nicely as possible. Ed was in the way most of the time, asking questions and trying to help and constantly surprised at her patience with him which indicated her complete happiness.

When she took the big crock and the wooden mixing spoon from the cupboard, Ed's interest multiplied at once.

"Are you going to make a cake?" he asked.

"Sure. We ought to have cask when we have company, don't you think?"

"Uh-huh. What kind are you going to make?" he wanted to know as he climbed up on a chair and rested his elbows on the table expectantly.

"I like that pioneer cake best, like I made last Sunday."

"Oh, goody, I like that one best of all too. I'll get the eggs and sugar for you while you get the other things," he said scrambling down off the chair and going to the cupboard. Then he stopped suddenly with a forlorn expression on his face.

"Don't you remember Eva we don't have any white sugar? You'll have to make something else. Ain't that a shame?"

"I've got some sugar," she assured him.

"Where? The sugar crock is empty."

Eva climbed on to a chair and reached up to the highest shelf of the cupboard and took an old red can from behind some other cans. She removed the lid and there in the can were two cups of sugar, one for the cake and one for the frosting.

"So you hid some away. Well, I'll know where to look next time."

"Then I'll hide it another place," Eva said.

"Yeah, and I won't believe you when you say there isn't any more and I have to eat sorghum on my oatmeal," Ed declared.

"Ed, you like cake as well as anyone else and I'll give you an extra big piece of it tomorrow if you don't tease."

"I'll be good. Can I lick the crock when you're done with it?"

"Yes, but don't bother me so much."

"I'm not bothering, I'm just trying to help. Here, I'll beat the eggs."

He grasped the big spoon and soon had them beaten to a yellow froth.

"Now what's next, sis,? Sugar?"

"That's right, now don't go so fast, you'll have it flying all over."

"I know how to do this. What next?"

"Here is the cream, now go slow, and a smidgeon of soda ---"

"What's a smidgeon?"

"Oh, it's just some soda, about a teaspoon, depends on how sour the cream is. There, I almost forgot the salt. Here, I'll finish that and you can grate some nutmeg for me."

Eva finished mixing the cake then checked her ingredients to be sure she had not made a mistake. She had originated the recipe and was proud of it and anxious to make it perfectly; one cup of sugar, two eggs, one cup of sour cream, two cups of flour, soda, salt, baking powder and nutmeg. It was all in the batter so she poured it in a pan and set it in the elevated oven of the new cook stove to bake. In 30 minutes it came out of the oven golden brown and light as a feather. While it cooled she cooked the frosting made of sugar and sweet cream, spread it over the top and decorated it with hickory nut halves.

Next Eva took two tin pails from the lower shelf of the cupboard and told Ed to follow her.

"Where are you going now?" he asked skeptically.

"To pick some strawberries for dinner tomorrow so come along."

"Oh, no, I can't pick them, my back gets too tired. Get Dick to help you."

"Dick is busy pulling weeds out of the corn so you come right along."

Ed grumbled but went with her to the berry patch down in the woods where the big juicy berries grew abundantly along the creek bank. In an hour their half gallon pails were full and the sun was going down so they went home.

The next day Eva served the dinner, her cheeks rosy from the heat of the stove. She carried the dishes to the table and passed the platter of fired cured ham, mashed potatoes, milk gravy, new peas from the garden, hot biscuits and last of all the dessert; a big bowl of the strawberries and the pioneer cake and coffee. The group lingered long at the table as Eva ate her dinner after waiting on the others and the conversation was jolly and entertaining.

After dinner Eva left the dishes for her mother and Ed to wash and she and Walter went for a long drive across the prairie to Bells Mill, following the winding road that wound around trees and ravines through shady lanes and Prince took his time for the young couple paid little attention to him. They were too busy talking with each other.

"Have you made any plans for the wedding?" Walter asked after they had talked of other things.

"I know I want to be married at home but I hadn't thought of the date."

"I would like the third of July if that suits you," suggested Walter.

"That is rather soon, only three weeks away but I can manage I suppose."
"But where will we live, we haven't any place."

"I have already bought that land and I thought we might stay at your home until we get the house built."

"That would be nice and I could be making things for our home. I don't have many things ready."

"Well, you're not so very old, no one could expect you to have dozens of quilts and rugs made. There will be plenty of time afterwards."

Suddenly the air was rent by the shrill cackling of a chicken which startled Walter and Eva for a moment and Prince felt Walter's involuntary check on the lines but he merely wiggled his ears in mild curiosity and the couple burst into merry peals of laughter when they discovered one of Mary Stuart's speckled hens had been riding under the buggy seat, had laid an egg and was only proclaiming her good deed to the world.

"Maybe we should consider it our nest egg," laughed Walter.

"It certainly would be a great help. We might claim the hen too if we take her back home again. How can we keep her from flying out, she won't ride so quietly now, do you think?"

"I'll get some grass and make a rope then I'll tie her legs together," Walter said.

He grabbed for the hen and being a tame chicken, Biddy made no attempt to get away. Eva held her while Walter twisted several of the long stalks of the

blue stem prairie grass together and tied her feet. He placed her under the buggy seat and they continued happily on their way.

The wedding day drew rapidly nearer and the Stuart house was astir with preparation. Eva and her mother worked long hours on the elaborate wedding dress and during the last week there was a great confusion of noise and chatter, excitement and work. On the day before the wedding, the house was thoroughly cleaned again, bread and cake were baked, and the two young wild turkeys dressed. Mary borrowed a table from Mandy Hook so there would be room for all the guests to sit at the table.

The ceremony was set for 12 o'clock and by 11:30 all the guest had arrived and were assembled in the kitchen-living room, the ladies in their best black dresses and the men uncomfortable in their high collars and Sunday shoes. John Ballards, Wes McKinneys, Whitakers, George Ballards, Frank Laytons, and Mandy Hook as well as Maggie Whitaker the bridesmaid and Ike Hook, the best man were there.

Mary was in the bedroom helping Eva dress, with the help of Mary Jane and Minnie, who thought she was the loveliest bride in the world. Her brown hair was brushed and combed into lustrous curls fastened at the left side with a cluster of pink roses that matched her dress of pink cashmere. It was made with a shirred yoke and high neck edged with lace. A bustle added to the elegance of the hoop skirt which also had a draped overskirt edged with lace. Her slim figure was accented by the basque waist and short puffed sleeves.

All was in readiness but at 12 o'clock Walter had not arrived. This caused some surprise, but not until more time had passed did the crowd become apprehensive. What could have happened? Guests shifted their position and whispered to each other. Walter was a dependable young man and no one could account for his failure to appear at his own wedding.

Suddenly the sound of thudding hoofs was heard above the stage whispers and Walter came tearing into the yard and up to the door calling for the doctor.

Dr. Stuart went out and Walter, looking very distressed and unhappy said, "Dr. Stuart, can you come over home right away? Eb is terribly sick, been sick all night. Aunt Margaret came over to help this morning and she has been trying to take care of him but he doesn't get any better so she thought we ought to have you come over. I s'pose Eva is disgusted but I just can't help it. Will you come now?"

"Right away, son," replied the good doctor.

Returning to the house, he explained the situation to the people, then took his saddlebags from the wall and went to the barn to get Queen. Together he and Walter rode at a fast pace to the Milburn home.

Aunt Margaret met him at the door with a worried expression.

"I'm so glad you could come," she said as the doctor came in and proceeded to diagnose Eb's illness. "It's been a madhouse around here with Walter wanting to get ready for the wedding. Jonathon was so worried we told him to go on out and do his work and Walt and I would try to take care of Eb, 'cause his actions made the child worse."

Eb lay on the bed, doubled up in misery from cramps but striving manfully to keep the tears from falling while he groaned feebly. The doctor examined

him gently and asked several questions finally arriving at the conclusion that too many half ripe gooseberries, green apples and unwholesome creek water had stirred up quite a disturbance in his tummy.

"Give him some warm water to make him vomit and then give him some of these pills every two hours," the doctor said. "He'll be weak for a day or two and can't eat much, but I think he will be feeling better in a few hours."

He patted the small sufferer on the shoulder and his friendly, confident manner served to allay the boy's fears and start him on the road to recovery.

In the meantime Walter had been making some hasty attempts to get ready for the wedding. He sent Will out to harness Prince and hitch him to the buggy and was upstairs dressing when he suddenly yelled impatiently,

"Alice, where is my shirt?"

"Oh dear me, I forgot all about it, Walt," she cried in despair. "I haven't ironed it yet, but I will right away."

"Where is it?" Margaret asked, "I'll iron it for you."

She took the shirt from the towel Alice gave her and looked for a place to iron it but there was none. The supper dishes were stacked on one end of the table and the breakfast dishes still covered the rest of the space. In desperation she spread a thick comfort on the floor, placed a sheet over that and ironed the new shirt that must be "done up" to look just right. With a thick pad to protect her hand from the iron that luckily was still hot from the stove she knelt down on the floor and ironed the stiff-bosomed shirt to glossy smoothness and handed it up to the impatient bridegroom.

In a few moments Walter rushed downstairs, gave his Aunt and Eb a hasty farewell, went out the door and leaped into the buggy and then with a light touch of the whip was on his way. Prince must have understood that this was an urgent occasion, for he trotted swiftly with no further urging from Walter. They caught up with the doctor as they reached town and the doctor urged Queen to go faster so they arrived at the house at the same time.

Walter arrived a bit disheveled and was more nervous than he had ever before been, which might be expected considering his difficulties; but when he saw Eva, sweet and sympathetic, his nervousness left him and he felt only a calm and loving pride in her as they took their places in front of the fireplace which was beautifully decorated for an altar with roses and asparagus fern.

They were a handsome couple as they stood there, Eva lovely in her pink dress and Walter looking very handsome in his black broadcloth suit with braid trimming on the lapels and his high top boots concealed under his trouser legs. Maggie Whitaker and Ike Hook looked more nervous than the bridal couple as Colonel Whitaker, Justice of the Peace, read the marriage vows and they repeated them quietly and distinctly after him.

When the ceremony was over Walter kissed his bride to her utter confusion, in front of the guests, then she was affectionately kissed by her sisters and mother and aunts and all the other ladies while the men congratulated Walter and all gave the bridal couple their best wishes for a happy successful life together, and no one looking at the serious bridegroom and the radiant bride could believe that their life would ever lack in work and faith, love

and happiness.

Mandy and Hannah served the wedding dinner and the table was loaded with good things. A large wedding cake and two big bouquets of roses and asparagus fern formed the table decorations. At each plate were small favors of roses and fern which the ladies pinned on the shoulder of their dresses and the men placed in the buttonhole of their coat lapels. Everyone ate with a relish for it was long past dinner time and the roast turkey, mashed potatoes, gravy, string beans, beet pickles, bread, butter and strawberry jam were passed twice, after which the bride cut her cake and this was served with black raspberries from the woods. They ate leisurely, and the conversation was full of wit and humor but the children who had to wait for the second table, cast some impatient glances toward the feast.

When the dinner was over Eva opened her wedding gifts and admired the many pretty and useful things, rugs, dishes, blankets, black handled knives and forks and other kitchen utensils. She and Walter thanked the generous people then prepared to leave at four o'clock. Eva changed to a dark brown dress of delaine, Ike and Dick hitched Prince to the buggy and the couple left amid great confusion.

They drove up through Stringtown, forded the river and followed the road to Homer as they had done when they went to Fort Dodge, then turned northeast to go to Webster City. The miles passed quickly as Prince trotted along and the sun was just going down behind the western rim of trees when they arrived at the hotel, where they expected to spend the night. The happy couple ate supper at the hotel, then went for a leisurely walk down through the city, a fascinating pastime, then slowly wended their way back to the hotel.

At nine o'clock the next morning they left Webster City and taking a different route soon reached the Leksell Grove where the Fourth of July Celebration was in progress. Many of their friends from Hook's Point were there who teased them and they all had a good time together.

Late in the afternoon they returned to Eva's home where they planned to live until their own home was ready.

Walter worked in his spare time putting up the buildings with the help of his father, Bill, Frank Layton and George Ballard. Eva spent her time helping with the work at home and making rugs and comforts for her home along with other necessities. She and her mother dried fruit, made kraut, dug the vegetables from the garden and stored them away and in their thrifty way prepared a generous supply of food for the winter months. The time passed swiftly and by the first of November the little prairie home was ready and they moved in.

Mary Jane and Minnie insisted on helping their sister, and somehow the job was accomplished in spite of all the confusion of talking and taking care of small children. Minnie's children, Daisy three years old and Bert two, and Eva Mae Layton required much of their mother's attention but they managed to get quite a lot of work done just the same. Eva's house consisted of three rooms, a front room 12 x 14 feet, a slightly smaller bedroom and a lean-to-kitchen.

Her greatest pride in all her furnishings was the rag carpet made of several strips of woven rugs, sewed together. First the girls put a thick layer of straw on the floor and stretched the carpet over it covering the floor completely. Then they tacked it down as they stretched it by means of a small pulley that worked like a wire stretcher, then the older children had their fun. Ot, Tressie,

Wid and Ed Stuart rolled on the nice, new carpet and smoothed down the bumps, laughing and shrieking like wild Indians and certainly testing the strength and durability of the carpet.

On Christmas day the Stuart children all went home for dinner just as all the other families did. In Mandy's home, all five of her children gathered around her table, Elizabeth, Will and Finch, Bill and Hannah and their three children, and Frank and Angie with their family which now included besides Ike and Ella; Ida, Alice, Willie, Roswell, and the twins Ettie and Nettie.

Olaf Rosengreen spent Christmas Day at John Berggren's home on which day he and Christine announced their plans to be married as soon as he could build a house.

It was a cold, sunny day but every fireside was warm with love and the Christmas spirit. In the Stuart home an old custom that was as much a part of the holiday as the cedar trees and popcorn balls and gifts, was again followed.

When all the members of the family were seated around the table they bowed their heads and repeated in unison this little verse especially for Christmas day:

Sing, ye carols, gladly sing
On this grand Christmas day,
And give our thanks for all good things
We find along Life's way.

Then Dr. Stuart filled and passed all the plates and enjoyed to the fullest the pleasure of a few uninterrupted hours with his family when the cares and troubles of others could be forgotten on this day when the reunion of a family means so much to all.

Chapter Seventeen

Colonel Whitaker Holds Court

The big bell on the school house called the boys and girls to their seats for the last time at Hook's Point on the last day of May, 1874, marking the end of the school year. The session was short that morning, for the teacher, Bent Eslick, wished only to give the pupils their report cards and a friendly farewell address.

After this pleasant meeting was over there was an excited time of comparing grades on the report cards and the joyous thrill of answering the all important question of "did you pass?" with a very expressive "Uh-huh!" The teacher presented each pupil with a beautiful booklet as a memento of the year spent together in fun and work. It was decorated with delicately painted flowers and tied with a blue ribbon and contained the name of the teacher and all the pupils together with several choice maxims and verses. These were rare treasures for the pupils who seldom received gifts, and this bit of pretty paper satisfied their desire for lovely things all their very own.

This time the picnic was to be held down in the timber where Doctor Stuart operated his sugar camp. The teacher closed the building and the boys and girls formed a procession and walked the short mile to the shady spot beside the creek. Later the parents came bringing the picnic dinner and at noon the mothers and sisters spread the food on the checked tablecloths and all ate until they were no longer interested in even the thought of food.

The children played games but the older girls liked better to sit and talk about dresses and ribbons and especially the Fourth of July. Of course, it was a whole month yet before time for that celebration, but it was the most wonderful day of the whole year and about half of the joy was derived from the glorious anticipation of the event.

There were three important and very pleasant days in a year; the last day of school, the Fourth of July and Christmas, and of these three, the day of the celebration of Independence Day was the best. Christmas was very nice but it was often cold, forcing people to remain at home and there was little money to be spent on gifts. They learned the meaning of Christmas and understood the sentiment and enjoyed it but there was so great a difference between the two holidays that they could not be compared. Children and young people respond more easily to fun and gaiety and good times; it is when people grow older that they really understand the deeper meaning of things. This is right and proper, because life is full of serious thought, and boys and girls must have their youthful carefree days so they will grow up naturally and will not, when they are adults, feel that they have missed out on something very important in youth and in their delayed search for it, become failures in life.

Four girls sat apart from the others under a big walnut tree.

"What kind of dress are you going to wear on the Fourth, Maggie?" asked Alice Crane, as she picked long stems of grass and braided them.

"I'm going to have a blue silk, mother is going to make it next week," Maggie replied.

"Oh, that will be lovely," exclaimed Minnie Lane. "Mother thinks I can wear last year's but I want a new one, don't you too, Ella?"

"Of course, and Mother says she will make me a pink plaid gingham one," said Ella Hook, settling herself comfortably on a grassy mound.

"Well, I want one made of white embroidery with a wide blue sash. If I can't have a new dress, I'd just as soon stay home," Minnie said emphatically.

"I would too, but listen girls," Maggie said confidentially. "This is a secret, but I'm going to wear bangs that day too."

"What?" exclaimed Ella. "You're not going to cut your hair like that are you? Mother would never let me," and all the girls became suddenly alert.

"Of course not. That's the big secret. I have an aunt who lives in New York and she sent us a box of ribbons and beads and these artificial bangs that you can tie around your head and no one could tell they aren't real hair. The other girls were sure mad because I was the only one who could wear them, their hair is too light but the bangs just match mine exactly," and she chuckled triumphantly.

"Isn't that just too lovely?" said Minnie, trying not to be envious.

"Supposin' they fall off," Alice said with a speculative gleam in her eye.

"They won't, Maggie declared confidently, "I'll fasten them on so they can't possibly come off."

"Well, I hope its a nice day," remarked Alice, changing the subject, "Wouldn't it be terrible if it rained?"

"Don't mention it, Alice," said Ella in disgust. "I never sleep for a whole week before, just worrying about it."

"It would be awful," agreed Minnie, " 'cause we can't put it off like a school picnic or anything, it just isn't the same."

"For goodness sake, girls, let's not cross any bridges until we get to them," Maggie said sensibly. "We can't do anything about it anyway so let's forget it. Say, I believe Mr. Eslick is passing around some sacks of candy. Come on!"

The girls scrambled to their feet, their personal affairs forgotten in favor of a new attraction, and joined the other picnickers. The afternoon passed swiftly and all too soon it was time to go home, but the children were very happy over the prospect of the long, pleasant vacation days ahead.

Hook's Point had its first church wedding when Christine Berggren and Olaf Rosengreen were married on June 10th. It was a social occasion that caused a great flurry of excitement and interest. All the members of congregation were invited and every family wardrobe underwent a thorough polishing several days in advance. New dresses were made or old ones altered and suits were aired and pressed. The men cut the boys' hair and the ladies in turn cut the mens' hair.

At two o'clock on Sunday afternoon the church was filled to its capacity and the people were waiting in that hushed, expectant atmosphere of suspense that surrounds a solemn affair of this kind. The church was decorated with bouquets of wild flowers that filled the room with their sweet perfume.

Annie Whitaker took her place at the little organ and played soft music for a few moments prior to the entrance of the bridal party. Colonel Whitaker led the way, followed by Claude Deo as best man and Elizabeth Hook as bridesmaid, then came Christine, fair and lovely in a beautiful dress of white embroidery made with long sleeves and high neck; her slender waist encircled by a pink sash. Olaf walked proudly beside her, dressed in a navy blue broadcloth suit, stiff bosomed shirt, and black bow tie.

The party took its place in front of the altar and Annie sang, "Love's Old Sweet Song". Then Colonel Whitaker, Justice of the Peace, performed the ceremony. After the wedding Christine's mother served lunch to all the guests, then the newlyweds went to the new home which Olaf had built next door to Berggren's. It was all furnished, ready for them to start housekeeping but when Christine stepped into the front room she was surprised to find a new article of furniture that proved to be an extra wedding present from her father.

She had often expressed the wish for a large bureau, so John had made one in his workshop during spare moments and managed to keep the secret from her until this day.

It was a beautiful piece of workmanship, made entirely of native black walnut. The wood was polished to a satiny smoothness and the front of the large drawers were decorated with fine ornamental strips of wood. Christine was delighted and prized this gift above all her other possessions.

Colonel Whitaker and Olaf had been good friends for a long time, the Colonel visiting often in the shop while Olaf worked. Now he frequently accepted an invitation for dinner especially when Olaf knew Christine was planning to have Ostakakka, one of the Swedish dishes that Olaf liked and which was a special treat to the Irish Colonel.

At last after interminable weeks, the day of the Fourth of July dawned warm and clear, without a cloud in the sky to dim the joy of the youngsters who tumble out of bed at an early hour to help do the work and get ready to go to the celebration in Johnny Johnson's pasture. All the garments for each member of the family had been laid out on the spare bed or hung carefully where they could be found and put on in a minimum of time.

The day before was a hectic day for the mothers, who baked bread and cooked food to take along for dinner. The first string beans for the year and bright red beet pickles added their bit to the joyous event as well as the juicy black raspberry pie made from the first berries that ripened in the woods.

By ten o'clock there was a goodly crowd present, eager to take advantage of all the fun and not lose one minute of it. Like celebrations of other years there would be footraces, a parade, ball games, noise and confusion.

Anson Deo furnished the chief attraction with a new merry-go-round that he had made for this day. It was a great improvement over the one Frank Hook had made because it consisted of four wide seats that could hold three children easily and it turned by means of horse power instead of man power. It turned on a swivel; a rock elm center pole set in a bowl shaped socket which, when turned moved the entire thing. Anson poured soft soap into the socket at intervals to make it turn more easily and keep it from squeaking.

Steady "Old Kate" went 'round and 'round patiently, with a few minutes rest once in a while. The price was ten cents a ride and the children could not afford many rides but they were content to spend all their money in one place that day and it was also great fun just to stand and watch the others

ride and live again the perfect joy of their own ride. It attracted the young folks as well and they rode on it, getting as much pleasure out of it as the children.

Several of the young men had ridden their horses in and a few of the owners thought it would be fun to have a horse race after the other games were over. The idea appealed also to a group of the older men who were interested in fast horses and liked nothing better than a good race.

"Let's throw in some money and give the boys some prizes," suggested Wes Hook. "I'll give a quarter if the rest will."

This suggestion was promptly accepted and Wes passed his hat. When they counted the money they found they had five dollars, so they agreed to give a first prize of three dollars and a second prize of two dollars.

Six young men went after the horses, adjusted their saddles and lined up in the road in preparation for the race. By this time a large crowd had assembled to watch the proceedings and when Wes gave the signal, "GO", the riders urged their horses forward wildly.

Harry and Robert Whitaker were riding two fine horses and most of the spectators were willing to bet on them because the horses that Finch Hook and Claude Deo were riding were not as fast and soon lost out. However, two strange young men had entered the race and seemed to be showing the Whitaker boys some stiff competition. Their horses, a bay and a black, were rather skinny, nondescript looking animals but they were large boned and muscular and the crowd was amazed as they watched the two horses stretch out their long awkward looking legs and steadily gain speed. Before they had covered half the distance, they were well in the lead and seemed capable of holding it. The men who had put up the money for the race shouted and waved their hats in encouragement to the two in the lead, sure they were able to pick the winner.

The horses were fast approaching the end of the race and the two in the lead were running neck and neck. The excitement of the crowd had reached the stage of intense interest that caused some to shout and jump up and down while others stand speechless waiting with bated breath for the end of the suspense. Will Hook was standing at the other end of the track ready to name the winner but the horses were so even that it was almost impossible to tell which had really won but he declared that the bay was ahead, perhaps by a nose.

The young men came riding back to Will to claim their prize money.

"What's your name?" Will asked the rider of the black horse.

"John Adamson" was the reply.

"And yours?" Will asked the other man.

"Harry Sinclair."

"Where you from?" Will asked in his friendly way.

"We're from the west, going to Des Moines, and I can sure use that prize money," replied John.

"You boys won it easily, and you have fast horses when they can beat the

Whitaker racers. Here is your money, two dollars for you John and three for Harry the winner."

"Harry did not win that race," John declared emphatically.

"I sure did," Harry replied.

"Oh, no you didn't. I've won every race we've been in from Yankton to this place and I won this one too."

"I was sure the bay was ahead, they were so close it was hard to tell. If you're not satisfied why don't you split the difference?" Will asked,

"Not on your life. My horse won and I'm sticking up for him. He's got a reputation at stake and I ain't givin' it 'way. Hand over the other buck, buddy."

"I will not," Harry refused, his temper rising.

By this time the group was surrounded by a large crowd of curious people all eager to hear and see what was happening. Things happened.

John swung a hard fist and caught Harry on the jaw with such force that it nearly toppled him over. Harry got made and swung back at his partner but the men standing nearby thought it had gone far enough so they pulled the two former friends apart and held them while they glared at each other.

"A fine friend you are," Harry said in disgust. "Just because I never won before you think I can't. We'll do it all over again and I'll prove it to you."

"No, you won't," Wes said. "This is all in fun and fair enough so you'll have to settle in court tomorrow."

"Court?" John cried in surprise.

"Yes, Colonel Whitaker is Justice of the Peace and you can go to his house and have him settle it."

"It's all right with me," Harry said.

"Will you boys stay here until tomorrow or will we have to lock you up?" Wes Hook asked. "You can stay at my house tonight if you will promise not to run away."

"You don't need to worry about me", Harry said.

"Nor me. My word is good." John declared.

A man's promise was as good as his bond so Wes told the boys to be at Colonel Whitaker's at ten o'clock the next day and for all the witnesses to be present. No one would have missed it anyway, court was a real treat.

The crowd returned to the celebration now that the excitement was over and the incident was forgotten. At five o'clock people began to go home to do chores, the children were weary from the long day of exciting events and eating too much candy so they climbed into the wagons and surreys and rode home contentedly.

The celebration was not over for many of the people however, for Anson was holding a big dance at the hall that night and many of the young people and even some of the older ones were planning to return for this affair. Anson had a big sign on his merry-go-round that said, "Dine and Dance at Deo's tonight for \$2.50." The girls had been very careful of their new dresses for they must do double duty and look fresh for the dance.

Anson drove old Kate and Krazy home and prepared to spend a busy night playing for the dance. Customers began drifting into town long before dark and lingered in the stores and hotels until time for the fun to start.

Numbers were given out for the square dances and the men had to take turns since only three sets of four couples each could dance at one time.

Anson tuned up his fiddle and called, "Get your partners for a quadrille."

Boys always had their partners engaged in advance and the couples lost no time in taking their places. Anson played the first few bars of the tune and the young folks full of life and energy, joined hands and started circling. Anson stopped promptly, tapped his bow on the back of his violin and said, "I'll tell you when to start."

This did not embarrass the dancers. It happened every night, but he calmly stopped them and started them all together. Again he started the music and called the dance in a clear loud voice that carried distinctly to the other end of the room over all the noise of music and laughter and shuffling of feet.

At a certain place in the tune of "The Girl I Left Behind Me" Anson called, "All hands left" and the men went one way, the ladies another until they returned to their partners. Then he went on with the call, keeping the words, the music and the movements of the dancers all together.

"First couple, lead out to the right, change partners and sasha out;

Right and left through and balance two and swing the girl behind you.

On to the next." This was repeated until the couple returned to their original place with the "All hands left." Then the second couple led out and went through the same process. All four couples repeated it until the last couple was back in place then Anson called, "All hands left, grand right and left, meet your partner and promenade back. Swing on the corner, then swing your own."

The couples were accustomed to Anson's calling and, understanding the calls, were able to dance together perfectly, making a very pretty spectacle. After a moment's rest another change was called, this time the Ocean Wave. This was the prettiest dance to watch because the dancers wove back and forth, dip and dive, like the ocean wave, as one couple lifted their arms with hands clasped and another went under them in a smooth, rolling movement.

These two changes completed one dance and Anson called, "Get your partners for a waltz". Many more couples crowded onto the floor for this kind of dance and waltzed with beautiful ease and grace as Anson played "Buffalo Girl" chanting the words part of the time as he played.

"Buffalo Girl is a comin' out tonight, comin' out tonight, comin' out tonight, Buffalo Girl is a comin' out tonight, To dance by the light of the moon."

Mary Deo served lunches and midnight supper to couples who came down from the crowded hall while they were waiting their turn for a square dance. Anson played steadily until midnight, changing from one dance to another, playing different tuns, Turkey in the Straw, Arkansas Traveler, Irish Washerwoman, Little Brown Jug, Hornpipes and Schottisches. He could play until midnight easily and never play the same tune twice, so wide was his assortment of tuns. After a short intermission, he picked up the violin and started all over, with no lessening of enthusiasm in the crowd.

At three o'clock Anson began to nod sleepily as he played and suddenly turned a fast polka into a waltz, by playing "Home Sweet Home," the tun that signified the dance was at an end.

The big celebration had come to a glorious finish, a day which old and young liked to look back on not only for the pleasant memories but for what the day meant to all of them.

The trial of the two strangers had aroused considerable interest among the townspeople and next day there was a large crowd at the home of the Colonel. He had heard a few of the particulars, enough to give him an idea of the facts but he preferred to hear most of them from the clients.

Colonel Whitaker sat behind his desk in the parlor of his home and looked very stern and forbidding as his sharp gaze appraised the two young men who stood before him. Wes and Will Hook were there as witnesses as well as a roomful of other men who liked to hear the Justice of the Peace hold court on inconsequential matters of this kind.

"Your names, please," the Colonel said, clearing his throat in a very official and important matter.

"Harry Sinclair."

"John Adamson."

"What seems to be the trouble, boys?" the Colonel asked kindly.

"Harry took my prize money," John declared angrily.

"I did not, I won it," Protested Harry, "and besides, you hit me."

"You had it coming. That old plug of yours couldn't beat my horse if he tried a hundred times, so why lie about it."

"I didn't. The judge said I won and you flew made 'cause you can't stand to have anyone beat you, you poor sport."

"Just a minute, boys, what are you here for, because you want the money question settled or because one of you got hit?" asked Whitaker.

"I reckon it's because we were fighting, but we could have settled it if these men had left us alone. We've settled our troubles before," John said.

"Did John hit you pretty hard, Harry?" the Colonel asked.

"Almost broke my jaw," Harry declared.

"I didn't hit you very hard, I hadn't got wound up yet," John asserted.

"Maybe you could show me how you were fighting, without actually hitting each other of course. Go ahead, maybe I can tell more about it." We usually have a lawyer to argue these things but I didn't think this was important enough to bring in anyone so I will try my best to be fair," Whitaker said.

John and Harry stood back and began going through some of the motions of fighting while the crowd stood craning their necks and straining their ears so they would be sure to see and hear everything.

John swung at Harry being careful not to touch him then Harry swung back like they had in the regular fight.

"Was Harry expecting you to hit him yesterday so he had a chance to defend himself?" Whitaker asked. "I don't quite understand how badly Harry was hurt."

The whole business had begun to look kind of silly to John and being quick tempered, he turned to the peace officer and said,

"I'll show you how I hit him, maybe you can understand that better," and so saying took a punch at the Colonel that landed neatly on his nose.

The crowd shifted uneasily wondering just what would happen next because the Colonel could be very fiery when he wanted to.

In the silent moment that passed the Colonel took his handkerchief from his pocket and wiped his nose carefully, feeling of it very gingerly, apparently deep in thought, then he burst out laughing. The sigh of relief that escaped from the audience was more expressive than any words could have been.

"Put 'er there, son. I don't blame you for getting mad. I think this was all a lot of foolishness anyhow, but I have my duty to do," Whitaker said extending his hand which John clasped most cordially.

"I don't believe in fighting though and you should learn a good lesson from this experience. You really didn't do any harm this time but if you keep on you might get into real trouble. I did think I would charge each of you a dollar for bothering me but I'm not going to do that either. I was young and hot tempered once, it's all right if you can learn to control your temper so this little incident may do you a lot of good in later life. Now, shake hands and get out of here."

John and Harry shook hands and grinned at each other like the good friends they had been for years and appeared very happy about getting back on the same ground again.

"Thank you, Colonel" both boys said as they turned to leave.

"You're welcome," Whitaker replied with a characteristic wave of his hand, "Goodby and Good Luck."

The crowd left the room with the boys, having enjoyed the trial immensely and glad that everything had turned out so pleasantly.

Erastus Carpenter had been doing quite well in his store and also made extra money at his carpenter work so he started building a new house that summer. He moved the log house back where it could be used for a barn later and prepared to build the new house on the same location. He hired Anson Deo to haul the cement for him from Webster City and he mixed the mortar for the foundation himself. Then he started building the which promised to be the

finest one in town with the exception of the Whitaker's. Erastus was a fast, efficient worker, the walls and floors were soon in place and the people were amazed at the magnificence of the structure.

Erastus plastered the walls of the seven room house carefully, making them smooth and fine in appearance. All the floors were of solid oak, smooth and easy to keep clean. The new house gave the town an air of prosperity and importance that pleased all the residents and they joined the Carpenters in their feeling of pride in their new home.

Other families had something to be proud of as well. A daughter had arrived at the home of Walter and Eva Milburn and was given the name Nellie.

Anson and Mary Deo had always wished for a daughter although they were very proud of their four sons, Claude, Tat, Allie and Charlie. Finally their wish was granted when not one baby, but two arrived, a girl and a boy. They were the first twins to be born in the town; Frank and Angelina had twin daughters but they lived down by Des Moines River.

Dr. Stuart delighted in telling a good joke on Anson concerning the babies. He was so happy about the girl that he almost forgot to appreciate the boy and with his usual wit remarked, probably while still under the daze of the surprise, "It does beat H--- that we couldn't get a girl without there had to be a boy along with her." The Deos named the babies Harry and Hallie and were equally proud of both so no one took the joke seriously, knowing how welcome both were in the home.

Anson's merry-go-round created so much interest that he decided to take it to the county fair at Webster City. He made four more seats providing room for more youngsters to ride. Allie led old Kate behind the stage coach to Webster City where he stayed with his father at the fair; Anson made a nice sum of money and enjoyed the interest the crowds displayed in his invention for it was turly his own since he had never seen any other, not even the one Frank Hook made.

Chapter Eighteen

Two Little Fishermen

In the deepest pools of the Boone River, where overhanging limbs of trees kept the May sunshine from warming the water, schools of catfish lay during the lazy afternoon, rousing only to snap at bugs and worms that floated by temptingly. Silvery bass sought safety and shelter around big rocks, nosing about in the cool moss that had gathered since the surging mass of spring flood water had subsided and allowed the moss to collect. Adventurous salmon leaped and darted about having a gay, careless time.

All was serene along the lazy river when suddenly the water was dashed and churned about by a surprised salmon who had swallowed a big bite of food which turned out to be fastened to a hateful hook. The ten year old boy, Lonse Gleason, who had been sitting patiently on the river bank, held tight to his willow fishpole and yelled excitedly to his companion, Ed Stuart, "I got one! I got one! But he sure is a fighter, I'll have to play him in slow. Oh, there he goes, he'll break my line sure!"

"Don't jerk your line so hard when he tries to swim away or he'll break it for you," Ed said, coming closer.

"He does the jerking," Lonse insisted, gripping the pole tighter in his hands. "I'm just holding on, but he is slowing down some, now, he's comin' in."

Slowly Lonse pulled the line in and when the fish was almost beside the shore he gave the line a mighty pull and the fish landed several feet over on the bank where he could not jump back in the water again.

"Oh, just look at him! Ain't he a whopper?" cried the little fisherman.

"He sure is," Ed replied, trying not to look envious, "he must weigh six pounds. What's the matter, did he swallow the hook?" as Lonse tried unsuccessfully to remove it.

"I guess he did. I can't seem to get it out."

"Shall I help you?" Ed was a couple of years old and more experienced so Lonse let him try it.

Ed held on to the fish and tried to pull the hook out but the fish had certainly swallowed it and he had to give it up too.

Isn't that just my luck. I only had two hooks and now one of them is gone," said Lonse forlornly. "And I've only got one line."

"It's too early to go home now and I haven't had a bite yet," said Ed. "Can't we cut the line and use the other hook on it?"

"I s'pose so, but we'll have to put this fish in the water and he is going to be hard to hold. I wish we had an old sack."

"I'll cut a good forked stick for you and fasten it so he won't get away."

Ed took his knife and cut a forked limb from a willow tree and slipped

one of the forks through the mouth of the salmon. Then he pushed the other end far into the solid ground just above the water. The fish fought to get away but he could not move the stick at all so the boys knew he could not loosen it. They fixed Lonse's line, then both sat down in the grassy bank to wait for a bite.

"This is the softest grass I ever saw," remarked Ed.

"Don't you know, this is bluegrass," explained Lonse. "Papa says he might have brought the seed her a long time ago."

"He did?" asked Ed in surprise. "How did that happen?"

"He used to live up in Wright county. Grandpa Gleason and his family were the first people who ever lived there. They used to bring their corn and wheat down here to the old Bruce mill to have it ground. There used to be bluegrass growing up there and he thinks some of the seed might have been in the grain and when the miller fanned it out it got acattered on the ground here and grew and has spread over this flat spot where the old mill stood."

"He had a long way to haul it, didn't he?"

"Sure but the worst part were the sloughs. The oxen sometimes got stuck and Grandpa had to carry the sacks of flour and meal out and set them on the ground, then hitch the oxen to a chair on the end of the tongue so they could pull the wagon out."

"Didn't he ever drop many sacks or get them wet?" asked Ed.

"Oh, once in a while they got a little damp from setting on the ground but he never dropped any. It was too big a job hauling them back and forth to get careless and drop them."

Just then something gave Lonse's line a severe yank almost pulling it out of his hands, since he was absorbed in his story and not expecting it.

He didn't have much trouble landing this catch this time but as he pulled it out of the water he stopped in dismay and called to Ed.

"Look! A snake. I caught a terrible old snake."

"Aw, snakes don't bite on fishhooks," said Ed coming to see what it was.

Lonse was standing back looking at the ugly thing that certainly looked like a snake. It was about three feet long but was larger through the body than a snake.

"I'll bet that's an eel," said Ed. "I've heard papa tell about them."

"Yes, but it's no good and now my other hook is gone. If I don't have the worst luck today."

"I don't call that salmon bad luck. I haven't had even one bite today. I thought we'd get some catfish on those frogs too."

"I hate to touch that nasty thing but I want that hook. Do they bite?"

"No, I don't think so. Some people eat them. If it wasn't so far to town you might sell that to Erastus Carpenter," replied Ed.

"Do you really think he would want it?" asked Lonse. "I'd take it down to him if he would buy it and give me back my hook."

"We can try it and we might as well go, I can't catch anything today."

"All right, I'll stop at home first and leave the fish for Mother to clean for supper."

Ed carried his pole and the fish and Lonse carried the ugly old eel at arm's length to his home only a short distance away. There he got a sack in which to carry the eel and told his mother he was going to town.

"Be sure to save the hook," he told his mother.

Erastus Carpenter was sitting behind the counter when the boys entered the store. When he saw who they were he smiled and said, "Hello boys, what can I do for you today?"

"Well, we want you to do something for us, or for me, anyway," said Lonse, untying the sack. "Do you like eels?"

"Eels? Sure, they're better than fish any day."

"Would you buy one?"

"I might. Why? Do you have one?"

"Uh-huh. I caught it today and Ed said you liked them. How much will you give me for it?" He dumped the squirming thing on the floor.

"Say, now that's a dandy. I'll give you 75 cents for it."

"Why don't you give me a chance to buy it, Lonse?" asked Ed Johnson who had come in from the back of the store and heard the last few words.

"Do you like them too?" Lonse asked incredulously.

"Yes, but I beat you to it, Ed." Carpenter said. "I've already bought him. He's pretty big, maybe I could divide with you."

Ed looked mighty wishful and Erastus had a sudden inspiration.

"I got an idea. You and Delilah come over for dinner tomorrow. My wife will cook it but she won't eat it, so I'll need some help."

"That's a good idea. We'll do that. I don't think Delilah will eat it either but the women can fry some eggs, we won't worry about them."

Erastus gave Lonse 75 cents for which he thanked the storekeeper, then said, "But I want my hook."

"Your hook? Where is it?"

"In that eel, that's one reason I brought it down here, I was afraid to touch the nasty thing and get it out."

The men laughed uproariously at the little fishermen, then Erastus looked at his stock of hooks. "I've just got two here and I'll give you both of them. Is that fair?"

"It sure is. Thanks. Come on Ed, it's time to go home."

As the boys walked down across the bridge, stepping carefully so they would get no slivers in their bare feet, Lonse stopped suddenly and said, "I'll bet you'd like to have a taste of that fish I caught, wouldn't you? Let's stop and ask your mother if you can't go home with me and stay all night, then you can have some of it. You helped me a lot today."

Ed looked very pleased. "Are you sure your mother won't care?"

"Of course not."

Stopping at Ed's home and receiving permission for him to go with Lonse, they followed the road to the McKinney school then cut across the timber over the same route they had taken to town. It was almost suppertime when they reached Gleason's place so they washed their hands and faces and waited on the step until Mrs. Gleason called them to supper.

Ed and Lonse took their places at the table with Solomon and the two girls older than Lonse, Electia and Viola and the younger children, Manley, Raish, Lydia and Charlotte.

"How does my fish look?" asked Lonse proudly.

"It was a very nice one but it isn't any wonder you couldn't get the hook out," his mother replied. "A small sunfish had taken the hook first and your fish swallowed that but I saved it for you. Papa caught some catfish on the throw line so we have lots of fish tonight."

"Mmmm! That is good, isn't it Ed?" asked Lonse taking a big bite of the golden brown fish. "Did you roll it in cornmeal mamma, before you fried it?"

"Yes, I always do,"

"You said you got 75 cents for that eel from Carpenter?" said Solomon.

"Uh-huh. He was crazy about it," replied Lonse.

"He was welcome to it," chuckled Solomon. "Looks too much like a snake to suit me. I don't see you ever caught it."

"He sure didn't want it," laughed Ed. "You should have seen the look on his face."

"I didn't see you touching it any," said Lonse with a grin.

After supper the boys and girls played games until bedtime then the boys went upstairs and all wanted to sleep with the visitor so they slept crossways in one bed in a land of pleasant dreams.

The next day Lonse and Ed went to town and Lonse bought a new pair of shoes from Erastus with the 75 cents he had received for the eel. Then they went over to Olaf's blacksmith shop, their favorite haunt when in town. They enjoyed watching the sparks fly from the anvil where he shaped and pounded the iron pieces for the wagons John made, and pounded the plowshares out thin for use again. As they were standing at a safe distance from the flying sparks a stranger stepped through the door and spoke to Olaf.

"Hello there. Are you busy for a while?"

"Olaf looked up from the work he was doing and smiled at the stranger.

"Not so much, just now. Are you in a hurry?"

"No, I wasn't going any farther but my horse pulled a shoe down the road a ways and I wanted to get it fixed before I put him in the barn."

"Sure, I fix hom now. Bring him in."

The stranger, who walked with a slight limp, led his brown horse inside the sop and held him while Olaf examined the shoe.

"Um-huh, just about took it off. Good thing you was close to town. I vill haf to take all the nails out and put in new wans."

The horse stood quietly as Olaf worked and he continued the conversation.

"You say you was stopping here?"

"Yes," replied the stranger. I am Dr. Asa Chamberlain from down in the south part of Iowa. I've heard a lot about this town and I thought I'd come up and look it over. I'm anxious to find a suitable location where I can practice my medical profession."

"Oh, yah, a doctor. Vell, I don't know but maybe you pick'd a good place. Ve haf von goot doctor, but Doctor Stuart don't care much to go on long trips any more and I tink he might be glad to turn some of his beezness over to a younger man. Ve haf Doc Paul but he don't go out much either."

"You think I might make a living here, then?"

"Yah, I tink so, if you don't live too doggone high," Olaf replied with a jolly laugh. "Well, dere iss your horse, shot goot again."

"Good job too, mister, Say, what is your name?"

"Olaf Rosengreen."

"Glad to know you sir. Now, where could I leave my horse?"

"Deo has a barn behind his hotel, you might see him."

"All right, thanks."

Doctor Chamberlain led his horse over to the hotel, tied him to the hitching post and entered the hotel, and waited for Mary Deo to come from the kitchen where she was busy cooking dinner. She gave the stranger a quick scrutiny, noticing at once his neat appearance; he was of medium height, of broad build, with dark hair and eyes, wearing a well tailored brown broadcloth suit and brown hat which he removed as Mary approached.

"You are Mrs. Deo, I presume?" he asked politely.

"Yes, sir,"

"I am Doctor Chamberlain from the southern part of the state. I am planning to stay here indefinitely so would like to take my meals here and

rent a room too, which I will wish to use for my office."

"We don't have any room here," Mrs. Deo explained, "We only serve meals, but I could let you have a room in our house."

"That would be fine. I will bring in my traveling bag and leave it here until after dinner. My trunk will come on the noon stage. I suppose it will be all right to put my horse in the barn and feed him?"

"Certainly Mr. Deo will be home at noon and you can make arrangements with him about keeping it there."

Ed and Lonse had watched all the stranger's movements closely; when he had returned to the hotel the boys left town and went up to Ed Stuart's home to tell his father about the new doctor.

Doctor Stuart was very much interested in the stranger and said he might go down town after dinner and meet the young man.

"He looks all right and I liked him," Lonse said soberly. "But if I get sick you'll come and make me well again, won't you?"

"Sure, if you want me to," the doctor assured him patting him kindly on the shoulder. "But some will have to go to the new doctor too, and give him a chance. I can't take care of all the people any more, there are too many and I'm getting older, but I will always take care of my boys if they call for me."

"I know you will. It isn't far to our place anyway," Lonse said brightly, "You can walk that far easy, like you did the time Manly and I fell off the horse and Manly broke his arm. You were so careful it didn't hurt him much and those splints you whittled out made his arm heal up nice and straight. So, if I call for you, you have to come."

"I will," promised the doctor, and smiled with pleasure at the small boy's loyalty and childish trust, those things which brought him the richest reward in his work.

Chamberlain soon became acquainted with the townspeople, who extended to him their customary hospitality and within a short time most of the people in the immediate countryside had met the new doctor.

Doctor Stuart was very friendly to the younger man and expressed great confidence in his ability, which naturally inspired a trust in other people who gradually turned to him when they needed medical care. This brought a lessening of the strain on the older man who was well satisfied merely to look after those patients who had depended on him for many years and who lived closer home. Old Queen was still fat and sleek but she did not travel as fast or as easily or stand the long, hurried trips as well as when she and the doctor had gone into partnership together and fought the snowdrifts and sloughs during long, dark hours on the lonely prairie,

Now many more people were scattered around the country and there was real need for a younger man who could keep going for hours at a time when disease swept through the homes and many needed a doctor at the same time. Doctor Chamberlain rode well and his chestnut sorrel could run very swiftly, his light colored man and tail streaming out in the breeze as the rider bent slightly forward in the saddle, holding his saddlebags with one hand and the reins with the other. The two thought nothing of a trip to Bells Mill or

Saratoga or even to Lake Center.

There was a small settlement at Lake Center that was commanding considerable attention among the people and from time to time settlers drifted there in the hopes that the railroad might pass through sometime soon, a possibility that was still very remote for Hook's Point. Hewitt Ross and Colonel Whitaker were both working for it, but their efforts were rather conflicting. Ross wanted it to go through his place and Whitaker quite naturally wanted it to go through Hook's Point, which was the logical thing to do, but there seemed little chance of its going anywhere, so it was discussed in a desultory manner occasionally, and dropped time after time.

Olaf Rosengreen took a keen interest in Lake Center and in the fall of this year 1875, he bought 80 acres of land and with Christine and their baby daughter Alma, moved there to make their home. Olaf continued with his blacksmith work since his farm was located just at the edge of town.

This left Hook's Point without a shop for a time until Hank Turner, a man living just north of the McKinney school started blacksmithing, though this was not as convenient as when the shop was right in town.

Lehigh was also growing into a fair sized town on its very desirable location along the banks of the Des Moines River, about eight miles north of the forks of the Boone and Des Moines Rivers. Doc Paul's business in the drug store was not a flourishing as he would have liked so he decided to move to Lehigh, where he might have a more active business in the future. He moved out of his combination house and store on the side of the little hill and went to Lehigh to start a new business this same year.

Wedding bells were ringing again, this time for Elizabeth Hook and M. D. Bramon. They were married at the home of Colonel Whitaker, their only attendants being Will Hook and Eliza Dunbar.

Will Hook was a fine looking young man, with a friendly smile and dependable ways, and popular with the young folks. Although he had gone to the parties and dances with several of the girls in the neighborhood, he had never been even mildly in love with any of them up to the date of Elizabeth's wedding day when he first met Eliza. Now, the vivacious beauty of blue eyed Eliza threatened to upset the calm, even tenor of his days. He took her to the dance on the following Friday night and had a wonderful time until he discovered that Dr. Chamberlain was also displaying a keen interest in her.

Will realized he would have some strong competition from a very worthy rival. The doctor had the advantage of a good education and had more of the smooth, polished ways of a man of the world, while Will was apt to be tongue-tied at the most crucial moments. Nevertheless Will had determination and common sense enough to know that these factors were of small importance. He was of equal worth in every respect so it would have to depend on Eliza, which one she might favor.

Will had a fine team of driving horses for sale and the next week the doctor wanted to buy them. Will knew there was only one reason for this but he could not refuse to sell them, this would be too obvious, so he derived some consolation from asking ten dollars more than he had intended and the doctor paid it after a mild remonstrance. Next, he bought a new buggy from John Berggren and the doctor enjoyed the honor of owning the finest rig in the country since Walter courted Eva, a few years previous.

Another thing that bothered Will was the fact that he had promised to help the Whitaker boys drive some cattle to Boone the following Friday and he knew he could not get back in time to take Eliza to the dance so she would have to come with her brother and this would give Dr. Chamberlain a fine opportunity to take her home because he would have ample time to make the arrangements before Will could get there. Since he had taken Eliza to only one dance he did not feel that he had any claim on her and so would have to let things go as they would and hope for the best.

It took all day to drive the cattle to Boone and by the time the sale had been completed, the day was gone and after eating supper it was six o'clock when the boys finally started for home. Will led the group at a fast clip, making such good time they reached town at nine o'clock. The dance was already in progress and as Will passed through the street he could hear the music and the shuffle of feet across the floor and above the noise, Anson's voice carrying distinctly as he called the changes of the square dance. Both sides of the street were lined with teams, single outfits, and saddled horses, proof that a large crowd was in attendance. Will hurried home, dressed quickly and hurried over to the hall.

He made his way up the back steps of the building, and joined the group of people standing just inside the door watching the dancers. Will bought a ticket and joined in the conversation of the people around him while he searched the crowd for Eliza. He saw her dancing with Dick Stuart at the other end of the hall and also noticed Finch dancing with a strange girl but Doctor Chamberlain did not seem to be among those present.

Will felt much happier then and when the dance was over he kept his eye on Eliza and when Anson struck up the tune, "Where Has My Little Dog Gone" for a waltz, he made a speedy trip over to her.

"Good evening, Eliza," He said with a jolly smile, "May I have this dance?"

"Certainly," she replied happily, "But do you feel like dancing after such a hard day's work?"

"Of course, after sitting so much it is more comfortable to move around."

"Sure is a crowd tonight, hardly room to move without bumping someone."

"Yes, they all try to get on the floor for a round dance. How many square dances have they had?"

"Only two yet."

Hm. I won't be in one for awhile then. I got number 20. Will you save that one for me? Eliza?"

"I'd be happy to."

"Did you come with your brother?"

"Yes."

Just then Anson said. "All join hands and circle to the left?" So Will lost Eliza for his partner and did not get her again during the remainder of the dance. As the dance ended Finch and his partner were close so Will

touched Finch on the arm and when he turned, whispered: "Who is the lady?"

"Oh, it's you," said Finch. "I'll introduce you. Margaret, I'd like you to meet my brother Will, Will this is Miss Wellman."

"I'm glad to know you," said Will politely

"How do you do, Mr. Hook," said she with a smile. "This is the most wonderful place I have ever been."

"I didn't think I had ever heard of your family before. Where do you live?"

"Well, we have been living in Kansas but father didn't like it very well so he sold out and we are on our way back to Keokuk where he used to be in business. We are just stopping overnight. We cracked a wagon axle as we forded the river, the team didn't go where they were suppose to, and the wheel hit a bit rock. Father didn't think it would be safe very long so we stopped here to get it fixed."

"Is John Berggren doing the work?"

"Yes, but he didn't think he could make the old one strong enough, and as he didn't have any other, he had to make one. So we had to stay over until tomorrow. He told father about the dance and I'm having so much fun I'm really glad the old axle broke."

"Well, then, how about having the next dance with me, Miss Wellman?"

"I'd just love to," she replied pleasantly.

The next dance was a waltz and while it was in progress, Will saw Doctor Chamberlain come in. A sudden idea popped into his mind; he had just been ready to ask Eliza to take her home when they had to change partners and he had thought there would be time enough anyway to ask her next time they danced. The doctor always liked to meet all the new girls so Will planned to introduce him to Margaret and thus divert his attention from Eliza.

When the waltz ended Will thanked Margaret, then went to the back of the room and spoke to Chamberlain.

"You're kind of late, aren't you?" asked Will.

"Late is right," the doctor answered drily. "And I'm lucky I got here at all. Babies do pick the darndest times to arrive in this old world. Always at night, never in the morning when there isn't anything else to do."

"A doctor's life is hard and full of woe all right," Will agreed sympathetically, "but you'll soon forget about it when I introduce you to a young lady I just met. She's a fine dancer too."

Will looked over the crowd for Margaret but she was gone.

"Maybe Finch took her down to the hotel to buy some candy. I don't see her now but when she comes back I'll see that you get to meet her." Then Will went over to ask Eliza to schottische before Chamberlain had a chance.

Later Will saw Margaret sitting by Mary Deo so he motioned for the doctor to come and they went over to her for the introduction.

"Say, Margaret, I'd like you to meet our doctor --" Will began, then stopped suddenly in confusion as the girl looked at him in surprise.

"Oh, I beg your pardon -- I thought --" he apologized as he realized that this girl wasn't Margaret at all.

"But it's the same dress -- and your hair is the same" he insisted.

"Oh, I know what you mean," the girl said. "You thought I was Margaret, and the dresses are alike, but I'm Mamie Wellman."

"I'm pleased to meet you, Mamie," said Will. "Please pardon my mistake. I was going to introduce Margaret to our doctor, however, you might like to meet him too. Miss Wellman this is Doctor Chamberlain."

"The two acknowledged the introduction then the girl, said, "But I'd like to know you too."

"Oh sure, I'm Will Hook and if you'll excuse me, I'll leave you together, I have this dance taken. See you later," he said hastily and left.

"Seemed to be in a hurry, didn't he?" asked Mamie

"Yes, he did, but let's forget about him. Tell me about yourself. Aren't you a stranger here?" asked Chamberlain.

Mamie explained about the wagon axle and the two got along fine while Will asked Eliza for the next dance and all danced the polka. Then it was time for another square dance and this time Will's number was called so he and Eliza danced this one too. When it was over Will thought he should be more friendly and ask Mamie to dance with him so he looked for the blue silk dress with the white yoke and big sash and when he saw the young lady talking to Finch, he went over and joined them.

"Miss Wellman," he said then stopped again in confusion. "Say, how many of you are there anyway? This is the second time I've made a mistake about the girl in a dress like that. Are you triplets?"

The girl laughed merrily.

"I'll tell you a secret," she said confidentially. "I'm Alice and we are not triplets. But we only have this one good dress. Margaret is the oldest and she got this one to wear to a wedding. The dresses we wore to parties out there weren't nearly as nice as this so we thought we'd rather take turns coming up here tonight and all have a nice dress to wear. But it is confusing, isn't it?"

"It surely is. I was going to ask Mamie to dance but I'll ask you before you have a chance to get away or are you staying?"

"For two dances only. Then Sadie is coming up."

"Heavens, is there another one?" Will asked in consternation.

"Oh, indeed, but she is a blonde, the youngest of all and very pretty, you must dance with her when she comes up."

"All right," said Will, "and I'm glad we got this straightened out."

It was a rather hectic evening all the way through but finally it ended. Will managed to get ahead of the Doctor and take Eliza home so all ended well.

This friendly rivalry continued through the winter with Eliza treating both admirers with the same sweet courtesy that gave neither any special encouragement. Finally Will made up his mind it had gone on long enough, she ought to know which one she liked best, if at all, so one night as they were riding home from church he approached the subject squarely.

"Eliza, it may be a surprise to you if I tell you I love you but if you don't know it by this time I should tell you. Doctor Chamberlain and I have been rivals all winter and I'd like to know where I stand. If you don't care for me I might as well get out of the way and give him a chance but if there is any chance for me I'm not going to give up. I've made a little money this winter and could support you fairly well and I do love you more than anyone in the world, you're the only girl I ever did care about and I'd be very happy if you would marry me. Now, what do you think about it?"

"Well, to tell you the truth, Will, I was beginning to wonder if you ever would speak for yourself, or if you weren't serious."

"Couldn't you see I was in love with you? Why didn't you give me a little encouragement?"

"Did you think I'd throw myself at you? Couldn't you see I was in love with you either?" she asked rather impatiently.

Will laughed in relief and amusement.

"We're smart people aren't we, but I guess I just thought it would be too wonderful to be true for you to love me and was almost afraid to ask."

"You don't get anything you don't ask for, Will."

"I ought to know that very well and since you mentioned it how about a kiss, I've always wanted to kiss that dimple in your cheek."

Which he did.

They announced their engagement at the next dance, to a few friends and inside of five minutes every one in the hall knew about it and extended congratulations. Doctor Chamberlain shook hands with the couple and was a game loser. "We both had a good time trying, all's fair in love and war, you know, and I'm serious when I say the best man won. Good luck to you both.

Will and Eliza thanked him for his good wishes and there were no awkward feelings to mar their friendship.

"I suppose I can still ask you to dance, can't I, Eliza?" Chamberlain asked with his same old gay manner.

"I'd be delighted," she answered just as gaily and sincerely.

Will and Eliza were married in June and moved into the Doc Paul house that had been standing empty since the Paul family left. Will continued to farm his mother's place, do a little business in the livestock trade and frugally built a livery barn on the site of the old Steven's sawmill.

Chapter Nineteen

Winter in the Lighthouse

George Ross drove into town one hot day on the return trip of his daily journey from Boone to Webster City and back again. But this day he was late, the townspeople had been expecting him for several hours. The sun was low in the west and men were going in for supper when George stopped the team in front of Carpenter's store.

"What's the matter, George?" Carpenter asked, coming out of his store.

"Aw, I got a sick horse," explained George irritably.

"Sick, eh? What do you suppose ails it, colic?"

"No, I don't think so, acts more like distemper," George replied as he unhitched the team. "He seemed to be all right this morning when I started out but he kept getting slower as I neared Webster. He wouldn't eat any of his feed and only drank a little water. I've had to pound him along all the way from Bells Mill and I'm lucky to get this far."

"How old is that horse, about four years?" Carpenter asked, looking at the ailing animal as it stood with head down, trembling with weariness and illness.

"That's right, four years old last spring."

"It can't be distemper then, only colts get that as a rule. Well, you sure couldn't go any farther with him in that shape."

"I should say not, he's the sickest horse I ever saw. I suppose I'd better put him in the barn somewhere and ride the other one home, then I'll come along with Tom tomorrow and see what to do with him. But maybe I should tell father to come up and look at him tonight, he might know what to do about it."

"That's a good idea, George, but ain't you going to stop for supper?" Carpenter asked as George started to lead the other horse away.

"No, I'll eat at Mother's while I tell Father about this horse. He can take care of the harness too, when he comes."

George led the sick horse to a tree in the shade back of the store and tied him though there seemed little danger of the horse straying off in its serious condition.

Hewitt Ross came in an hour and all the other men in town gathered around to look at the animal but no one could tell exactly what might be wrong with it.

"Funniest thing I ever saw," said Hewitt. "It isn't distemper, acts like it might be a cold but that wouldn't affect him so much as this. I think I'd better leave him here tonight and maybe by tomorrow he will be better so I can take him down home."

The horse was little better next day, though rested from his trip so Hewitt took him home. But this was only the beginning of disaster. The malady

spread to the other horses he owned and also through the other horses in the country until the disease assumed the proportions of a real catastrophe. No one knew anything about the strange disease, nor how to treat it so the men decided to bring in a veterinarian to diagnose the trouble. This was done immediately and the veterinary from Des Moines told them it was a severe case of influenza among horses known as epizootie.

It was a peculiar disease which the veterinarians did not understand, therefore, they did not know how to treat it effectively. The men had to be very careful when they cared for the sick animals because it was possible for them to contract the disease also. Dick Stuart had a fine team of driving horses which were very sick and in his anxiety to give them the very best care he got the disease and was ill for a long time. He finally recovered, but it had left its mark on him and he never regained the rugged health he had enjoyed before.

None of the Ross horses were able to make the trips so George and Tom carried the mail in a sack on their back for many months. They took turns and went up one day and came back the next. They carried on their work faithfully like the old pony express that made the long perilous trips across the wild country of the west and never faltered in its gruelling task.

Few horses escaped the disease and this unfortunate situation was a severe handicap to the settlers since they had to depend entirely on this mode of transportation. The farmers were thankful for their ox teams with which they could do their farming, or their troubles would certainly have been greater. They could and did drive them other places although they were much slower. People walked more than ever if the distance was not too great, otherwise they stayed at home. Doctor Chamberlain's brown pony finally succumbed to the disease but if there was a well horse anywhere near he was always welcome to use it but he walked much of the time, even if he was slightly crippled. He had sold his driving team and buggy back to Will Hook who had good use for it in his livery business, but they got the disease too and it appeared that Will had picked a poor time to start this particular trade.

By the end of the spring of the next year 1877 the disease had run its course; some of the horses had recovered from the affliction though many of them had died and others were nearly worthless, so horses became valuable property.

Doctor visited often at the home of his friends, the Rosengreens, at Lake Center, and while there one time met an attractive young lady, Susan Speed in whom he became intensely interested at once. He called on her regularly and when horses were hard to secure for pleasure purposes he thought nothing of walking the eight miles to Lake Center on Saturday evening where he remained until Monday morning and walked back. As soon as he got a good horse again he would drive out to get her and bring her to the dances at Hook's Point.

The doctor was a very busy man for his fame as a fine physician had spread for miles around and he did not have the time to spend on his own pleasure that he would have liked. Sometimes it was impossible for him to carry out his plans with Susan so, being very practical and also truly in love for the first time in his life, he could see no sense in prolonging the courtship. Therefore, he proposed and was accepted by Susan and they were married at the home of Olaf and Christine, completely surprising their friends at Hook's Point when they announced it. They started housekeeping in town and the doctor moved from the room at Ed Johnson's where he and William Whiteman had been roommates for the last two months.

William was a friendly, ambitious young man who took a keen interest in everything that went on in the little town. The business men sponsored a lyceum at the hall on Saturday night following the Fourth of July celebration and as usual this form of entertainment was given a warm reception by all.

It was customary at these lyceums to have a debate on such questions as, "Which is more powerful, Fire or Water" or "Which is preferable, Life in the City or in the Country?"

William engaged Colonel Whitaker and John Robinson to debate on the question, "Who was the greater man, Washington or Lincoln?"

This was a particularly timely question since it was the Centennial year, marking one hundred years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Also, only 12 years had elapsed since the Civil War had come to an end and the greatness of Lincoln was still very fresh in the minds of the people.

The hall was filled with men, women and children eager to enjoy the program. They sat on seats made of wide planks placed on chunks of wood, and all standing room was filled as well.

The first part of the program consisted of music by Anson Deo, playing his violin, and diverging from his usual dance music to play such old favorites as "Darling Nellie Gray", "Yankee Doodle", "The Old Hickory Came" and "Old Black Joe." Claude Deo dressed like a dandy and did a fancy jig with such loose-jointed yet fast steps that the crowd clapped him back for two encores.

No program was ever quite complete without some kind of reading or recitation by Eva Milburn and this time she had selected "Maud Muller" which had been her favorite since schooldays. It was a favorite also with her audience, having heard it many times before, but they never tired of it, and listened with no sound or disturbance as she recited the many verses of the poem in her clear, sincere and expressive voice that was such a delight to her listeners.

Next came the debate. Colonel Whitaker debated for Washington and John Robinson for Lincoln. Both took their argument very seriously for each truly believed that his man was the greater. The Colonel presented his statements in a loud convincing voice, then John stated his in a more mild, yet serious tone of voice that was just as persuasive. John's wit and humor was well matched against the fiery, vigorous manner of the Colonel.

They discussed the personal victories of the two men as well as their victories on the battlefields, their generosity and sacrifice for their country and as they argued they proved that each man was truly great, each had done his country a wonderful service, yet in a very different way and when the debate was over and the crowd voted for their favorite, it was learned that the vote had ended in a tie. Consequently, the men were right back where they had started but it made a congenial conclusion to the debate, both men were equally great and that was the best way to leave it.

The crowd lingered long in the hall enjoying the social hour that followed. The Edward Atkinson family had driven into town from their farm 4 miles southwest near the Des Moines river and before the evening was over Mary Jane had been introduced to William Whiteman and this chance meeting promised to develop into a pleasant friendship. William expressed a very modest desire to see her at church the next Sunday night and she assured him that they would probably meet again.

The town had been without a regular preacher for many years and Frank Layton had been persuaded to conduct the services for the people. He had recently acquired a license as an "Exhorter" and had complied with requests at various times for delivering a sermon. He enjoyed preaching when he was in the mood and had the time, but he steadfastly refused to take up the profession as a steady job.

He brought his family along to church that Sunday night and Mary Jane sat in a back seat with her children, proudly showing the new baby Howard, who had arrived on the 24th of May. Frank preached a beautiful sermon, full of the aesthetic joy of life here on earth that he understood and enjoyed so much, and which he could reveal in a delightful manner to his audience. He seemed to be inspired by a higher power as he spoke and the people realized that to some are given a lovely vision that uplifts them and others to a higher plane, that removes the most humble plodder to a lovelier sphere from which no material distractions can dislodge him.

When the services were over, the crowd lingered in their usual custom, to shake hands and exchange greetings. William Whiteman spoke very cordially to Mary Jane Atkinson and after a few of the light, meaningless remarks peculiar to young folks he asked if he might take her home. She replied that she would be delighted so he asked her to wait while he got a horse and buggy.

William did not have one of his own so he asked Will Hook if he could hire an outfit. For fifty cents Will let him take his best driving horse and buggy. William drove up to the line of hitching posts in front of the church where Mary Jane was waiting. He helped her up in the buggy, stepped in himself, took the lines and drove away. Mary Jane was a beautiful girl, her blue eyes sparkled with the youthful pleasure of the moment and the moonlight picked out golden threads in her blond curls.

"Where is your home, William?" Mary asked, during a short lull in the conversation.

"I am from Texas but I suppose you have always lived around here."

"No, I was born in California but we came back here when I was eight years old, Elna was four and Oscar was five. My parents went out there during the gold rush."

"They did?" exclaimed William. "That is interesting. I've been noticing that pin you are wearing. It is very unusual, did it come from California?"

"Yes, Father had it made for me."

"That must have been exciting -- going out west and finding gold." said William with a wistful tone.

"Not as my folks tell it, I wouldn't care for it anyway." Mary said.

"I'd like to hear about it, so tell me, won't you?"

"Yes, because it is interesting. My parents joined up with a wagon train all anxious to get to California and find some of that plentiful gold. There were 50 wagons in the train and of course most of them were pulled by ox teams. They started out in the spring, taking the southern route that would lead them through Oklahoma and Arizona. It was a terribly slow hard trip. There was only a fair trail in places but as they went farther west, they could find the way merely by following the trail of skeletons and remains of burned and wrecked

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wagons."

"Indians?" inquired William.

"Yes, but they were fortunate, for a long time. They saw traces of them and tracks of their ponies but none of them appeared."

"None at all?" William asked in amazement.

"Just wait, I'll tell you about some later. And, look here, Mr. William Whiteman, am I to believe that you are disappointed because no Indians attacked the wagon train and killed all the people?" Mary asked in pretended astonishment.

"Of course not. I suppose that did sound funny, but what I meant was that I didn't suppose it would be possible to go that far and not see any troublesome redskins."

"I know what you meant," Mary Jane laughed at his confusion. "I was only teasing. But you'll have to wait for the Indians. We have to cross a desert first."

"All right, let's get started. I'm preparing for the Indians in the meantime," William said and they both laughed merrily.

"Well, this desert was 40 miles across and it was terribly hot. The people had several rubber bags filled with water but it was not nearly as much as they needed for themselves and the animals. The sand was so deep the wheel of the heavy wagons sank into it making travel slower and harder. After three days of this misery the oxen and horses were nearly exhausted and the people were very discouraged. Then all at once the animals picked up their ears, started walking faster and finally broke into a run. The drivers could not understand what was the matter, neither could they control them so had to let them go. To their surprise they soon came to the end of the desert and there flowing through a shady lane of trees was a river and plenty of good cold water. It was the most beautiful sight they had seen along the way. They rested there overnight and started on the next morning."

"And met the Indians?" guessed William.

"That's right," Mary continued. "As they were passing through a narrow valley, a band of Indians appeared at a nearby hill. There must have been two thousand all dressed up in their feathers and war paint. The people were terribly frightened and didn't know what to do. However, there was one man in the caravan who knew how to talk the Indian language so he told the others to stay in their places by their wagons and he would see if he could talk to the chief; if he could, he might make some terms with him and send them away. There was a big old warrior riding near the front of the band and this man went up to him, held up his hand and talked in the Indian tongue. I can't talk Indian of course, so I'll have to say it in English," Mary explained. "He asked, 'You Big Chief?'"

The Indian said, 'Ugh' and nodded slightly.

"What do you want?" asked the white man. The Indian replied, 'Me hungry. Me want grub. Give me all me can eat.' The man then asked him, 'Will you and your band go way and leave us alone? Promise?' The Indian looked at the caravan and at his own band then slowly nodded his head, 'Me promise.'

So my mother and three other ladies made some coffee and gave him some cold biscuits and bacon and raisins and the Indian ate until he was almost in misery by the way he acted. Then the white man tried to get him started on his way but the Indian shook his head. 'Me got seven sons', he said 'Sons hungry, want eat too.' The man tried not to show his alarm at this request. If they all ate like their father it would take a lot of food and the people did not have any more than they needed for themselves. Even then he might not be satisfied.

The white man then said to the Indian. 'I don't like people who break their promises but if you will promise again to leave us alone we'll feed your sons, but you have to keep your promise this time. You are a Big Chief who keeps his word, ain't you?' The Indian thought it over, then nodded his head and shook hands as additional proof. So some more ladies had to dig out their biscuits and meat and make more coffee and feed the seven sons.

But after they had finished they got on their ponies and rode a short distance away, watching the caravan which continued on for a short distance. It was time to stop for the night after all the delay, the men knew they could not run away from the Indians so they decided they would have to take a chance and drove their teams into a circle and prepared to spend the night. The Indians went up the slope of the hill, picketed their ponies, then all lay down on the ground in rows and spent the night there also.

As you might suspect, none of the travelers slept much that night but early the next morning the Indians caught their ponies, mounted and rode quietly away and every member of the band said a fervent prayer of thanks for their good fortune. A funny thing happened though. The caravan had only gone about a mile when someone noticed an Indian maid following them. She acted as if she wanted to talk to them but the people were afraid to pay any attention to her for fear the other Indians might return. She followed them for about fifteen miles, then going up to the lady riding in the last wagon she thrust a ring in her hand and fled. No one knew why she did it and they all felt sorry for her. She might have been a captive and all fixed up like an Indian no one could tell the difference."

"Goodness, that was exciting," exclaimed William rousing from his tense absorption in the story. "And did they have any more trouble?"

"No, they made the rest of the trip easily and arrived in California, six months after they had started out on their journey."

"And was there lots of gold?" Inquired William.

"In places, we didn't find so much. I was born in 1860 and by that time father had given up the gold mining and was trying to farm a little but it didn't go so well so in 1866 he decided to move back."

"Did you come back in a covered wagon too?"

"No, and that is another story if you'd like to hear it."

"Sure, I've never been many places myself and I like to hear these experiences of others."

"We came back the long way, by water and railroad. We boarded a ship in California and sailed down to the Isthmus of Panama. There we had to be taken overland with teams and wagons that were kept in a livery stable for that purpose. Since there had been 900 people on the ship, it took

several days to haul all of us across. All the work was done by the natives who looked like Indians. They were all dressed in white and wore broad brimmed straw hats to protect them from the awful heat of the Panama country. When we were all across we had to wait three days for the boat from New York but when it came we all scrambled on board and continued our voyage through the Gulf of Mexico into the Atlantic Ocean up to New York. From there we made the trip to Boone, Iowa by train.

"Whew, that went faster, or easier, at least. That must have been fun."

"Yes, it was, although I was but eight years old I can remember it clearly. It wasn't as cheap as the trip out though. There were five of us and the trip cost \$1,000."

"I think I might like that trip better too," said William. "I really don't see how I could go all the way to the coast, I don't even know if I could find your place a few miles out in the country."

"You're doing all right, it's only a mile farther on."

They talked of other things then and when William left Mary Jane at the door he was completely under the spell of her charm and loveliness.

"I've enjoyed this evening very much," he told her.

"So have I," she replied demurely.

"I should like to come again," he said, "if you would care to go."

"I would, indeed," she assured him with a smile and so another romance was started.

John and Eliza McKinney returned that fall from South Dakota where they had gone a few years ago driving their two yoke of cows. They returned with three cows but were driving a team of horses, and were anxious to find a place to live.

Frank Layton had not prospered noticeably on his homestead and many farmers experienced the same difficulty. Although he owed but \$75.00 on the land it seemed that he could not raise the money to pay off the mortgage. By practicing the greatest economy it required all he could make for living expenses and there was never any left over to pay off the debt. Farmers received such low prices for their salable products that while \$75.00 did not seem like a large sum of money yet it was mighty hard to collect that much above expenses.

When John McKinney returned, he offered Frank two cows for his equity in the place and Frank moved his family to the 40 acres owned by Dick Stuart and John moved on the homestead.

Ot Layton was now 14 years old and he did all the work around the place including the small amount of farming the next spring. Frank spent all of his time at his painting trade now, going to other towns and remaining the entire week many times, returning only to spend Sunday with his family.

Ot and Wid walked to Hook's Point often, taking a pail of eggs or a crock of fresh butter which they exchanged at the store for sugar and flour or cornmeal. While walking to town one day Wid snagged his shoe on a tough tree root that was hidden in the tall grass so while Ot did the trading and

and visited with Claude Deo and Fred and John Shaeffer, Wid went on to John Ballard's to have his shoe patched. John was in his shop tinkering away at some work when Wid got there but he laid his work aside and looked at the shoe to see what could be done about it.

The top of the toe was ruined and John saw he would have to put a patch on it, a process that held Wid's attention while John worked. He cut a piece of leather of the required size then made a needle out of a hog bristle; this was done by placing the split ends of the bristle around a length of thread then waxing it together until it was smooth and strong; next he made a hole through the leather with a curved hook, then run the needle and thread through the hole, repeating the process until the patch was sewed on securely, strong as any other part of the shoe. Wid paid him a dime and went back to town where Ot was waiting for him and they trudged home with their groceries under their arms.

This year 1878 marked a turning point in the future of the little town though few realized how far reaching its effect might be. The desire for a railroad still smouldered in the minds of the people and like the sluggish fire of an inactive volcano was only waiting for the time when it would burst forth again. The old survey still had two more years to run and if they waited until a new one could be made it would be several years before a road would be put through. Farmers were very anxious to get the road built so they might have some means of disposing of their surplus grain and livestock close at home instead of hauling the grain and driving the cattle and hogs to Boone or Webster City. So they were eager to see one come through and a mile one way or another made little difference. However, the merchants and residents of Hook's Point preferred to wait a while longer because if the road did not go through town they would be left out completely.

Naturally, Colonel Whitaker was pulling for Hook's Point and again offered the Northwestern Railroad company 40 acres of land if it would come that way. He had paid the back taxes on a quarter section of land west of Isaac's original quarter and he was willing to give them the land as a favor. The company was just as glad to consider it because the road could be built very easily down through the ravine to Sulphur Springs where there would be no big cuts through hills.

But Hewitt Ross wanted the road to come past his location where he was hoping to start a town so he offered the company a strip of land through his property if they would come that way. The problem was discussed at length and finally some plans were made to survey the land. The road would have to run about a mile south which pleased some and displeased others. However, the world rolls on in progress and improvement, some must gain and some must lose but that which serves the majority best will always bring some good to the world.

This same year John Berggren moved to a farm and Tilman Shaeffer sold out to L. A. Near from Homer. L. A. and his motherless children, Dora, Elizabeth, Ed, Maude and George moved into Berggren's house. Elizabeth was the oldest of the children and worked hard to care for them. She was a pretty girl of 17 years, with curly brown hair and gray eyes, small and dainty, sweet and lovable with a smile like sunshine.

William Whiteman and Mary Jane Atkinson were married in the spring and moved into the old Robert's house and William worked for Carpenter now that Shaeffer was gone. Beck Smith who had married another daughter, Jo, of the Near family also moved to town and went into business with L. A.

In addition to his store work, Near cut wood in the nearby timber and burned a large amount of charcoal. Several of these charcoal kilns were scattered about in cleared spots of the timber, which looked very much like an ordinary mound of dirt.

Hi selected sturdy basswood trees for this purpose and piled the logs closely together covering them with straw and a thick layer of dirt to make the mound airtight. Then he set a fire to the straw and logs and left it to smoulder for days and so tight was the dirt covering that not a wisp of smoke escaped. After several days the slow fire would burn itself out and all that was left of the logs was a charred mass of black, shiny substance. Bill sold the charcoal to blacksmiths all around the country who used it for hardening plowshares. It furnished a quick, intense heat that was very necessary for this kind of work.

Doctor Chamberlain brought 40 acres of land three miles east of town and hired Erastus Carpenter to build a house and barn on it. However, the doctor did not turn out to be as good an architect as he was physician; when the house was completed it presented a very odd appearance; he planned to live upstairs and let the family to whom he rented the land, live downstairs. Therefore he built the house two complete stories high and since it was only 20 feet wide and 25 feet long it looked all out of proportion. It could be seen for miles around on the flat prairie and the persons upstairs also commanded an extensive view of the country so people started calling it the "Lighthouse" just in fun and the name stuck to it.

Dick Stuart was well enough to take care of his own place again so the Frank Layton family made another change, this time moving into the light-house.

All went well until winter set in severely and the snow piled up on the level ground while the cold winds swept across the prairie. They seemed to go right through the house that proved to be too poorly constructed for the cold winters of Iowa. It was not plastered, the walls being made entirely of lumber, with siding nailed onto boards in an upright position. Though heating stove was red hot it could not warm the cold corners of the room. In an ordinary winter it would have been less uncomfortable but this was another of those cold seasons when the snow came early and stayed on late. People became accustomed to it, however, and ventured out, regardless of the weather, especially the young folks.

Gilbert Perry was operating a flour mill on Boone River seven miles northeast of town at a place called "Tunnell Mill" so named because Gilbert and his brother Lyman had dug and walled a 70 rod tunnel through a steep bluff to divert water from Boone River to their flour mill on the opposite side of the bluff instead of having water travel two or three miles farther around a loop. On Saturday nights the people for miles around came to his home and danced until the early hours of the morning. News of the good times enjoyed by the crowds spread to other communities catching the interest and curiosity of the young folks.

Of course Hook's Point had its dance hall and regular dances but there is always an extra spice of pleasure in going away to a distinct place and mingling with a different crowd of people. For some time Ike Hook had been trying to coax Finch to go with him to the Perry dances, but due to the deep snow Finch had hesitated to go along. But there was no chance of better weather for several weeks so one night in January the boys decided to go.

The temperature had risen some and it promised to be a fairly nice evening for the trip. Ike asked Alice Crane to go with him and Finch asked Minnie Lane. Ike's sisters, Ida went along, having overcome the usual brotherly protests quite easily for once. Ike took his own team and bobsled, the girls wrapped up warmly in several quilts on the straw covered floor of the sled and away they went their happy, young voices in tune with the musical ringing of the sleigh bells.

They drove north from town a mile then turned east, the unfenced prairie spread out before them like a great white sea in the moonlight. After passing a farmhouse about a mile over, they came to an untraveled field where the snow lay in even deeper drifts. The snow had not been packed down by travelers and the horses floundered in the soft, floury mass. Finally they got in so deep that the team could not pull through it and the boys had to get out, unhitch the horses and lead them out to a place where the snow was a lesser depth, then they carried the girls out and finally the sled.

After putting it all back together again they started on; they had gone only a few rods when they had to repeat the process. By this time Finch was getting disgusted, was ready to give it up and go back but Ike was determined to go on. The girls were also getting cold from standing around but the boys kept warm easily from their exertions.

Minnie and Ida didn't mind the trouble so much but Alice was not as hardy as the other girls, and she could not keep the tears from falling as she bravely tried to keep her chin from quivering. She wanted to go back but with the recklessness of youth Ike coaxed them to keep going. They were now a short distance from the road that ran north and south and would take them to Bell's Mill, accordingly they went on.

The boys had to carry the sled and the girls out one more time before they finally reached the road, then they traveled faster. But all of them now were completely chilled through and they were still several miles from their destination. Alice was crying in earnest by this time so they stopped at Wash Neese's place to get warm. There was no light as the family had gone to bed long ago, but Wash got up and built a good fire, and his callers warmed themselves gratefully. Mrs. Neese made some coffee for them and gave them doughnuts and they were in fine spirits when they thanked their hosts for the accomodation and started out again.

They drove to Bell's Mill then followed the river up to Perry's Mill. The dance was in full swing and the strangers joined in the fun forgetting all about their troubles and that they had a long trip home. At two o'clock the fiddler put away his violin which quite naturally put an end to the dance. Slowly the crowd prepared to go home, the return trip containing little of the pleasant anticipation of the first half of the trip. Most of the people had worked up a good sweat while they swung on the corners or whirled through the fast steps of the polkas and dreaded the chilly trip home. Women and children covered up in sleds and cutters and the men took the blankets from the patient horses then they went for home at a fast pace.

Ike followed the same road back until he was directly east of the McKinney school house, then he went west on a main road that was frequently traveled which brought them to the road that led through Stringtown down to Hook's Point. The return trip was made easily and the boys and girls were in as good spirits as when they left, for their good time had more than overbalanced their difficulties.

The long, cold winter slowly reduced the resistance of the people to a low ebb and in late January and February, the usual diseases of measles, chicken pox and whooping cough swept through the country and small boys and girls were patient victims of the different ailments. These were serious, though seldom fatal but a new malady brought additional fear and suffering to the parents and children when black diphtheria broke out. All of the Layton children became ill with the disease and were sick at the same time and Frank and Mary went through a terrible month of worry and constant nursing trying to bring their children safely through the illness.

They were very thankful that they had a doctor in the house who could render them such assistance as he could, though his knowledge of the disease was not thorough enough to give a great deal of aid. None of the doctors anywhere understood the ailment well enough to treat it very efficiently and it was such a severe affliction that it was difficult to counteract.

Dr. Chamberlain prescribed chlorate of potash for a gargle and Iodide of potassium solution as a swab for the throat. However, both of these types of medicine were scarce and when no more could be secured they had to paint the outside of the throat with iodine which blistered them badly but did help the trouble. When the supplies were exhausted Frank had to drive a team and sled to Webster City for more. Gradually the children recovered from the disease and were feeling better when Wid had a relapse. He suffered terribly from the condition of his throat, hardly able to eat or drink for several days, but after a time he responded to the faithful care of Mary, and the doctor's constant efforts, and the crisis was past.

Across the Des Moines River, the Charles Slattery family were not as fortunate. Their three boys contracted the disease and were seriously ill; Eugene, eleven years old, recovered first, then John the youngest boy began to show improvement but Clyde, nine years grew steadily worse and on the tenth day of April passed away. The parents were saddened even further by the difficulty of making funeral arrangements. The river was very high due to the spring rains and the melting snow, so the only way to cross the river was by boat.

Charles left the grief stricken mother while he went to Hook's Point to see about getting a coffin made and to make arrangements about the burial. It was five o'clock when he crossed the river and he went first to John Ballard' to ask him to make the coffin. John promised to make it that night and bring it down to the river early in the morning. Then Charles went down town to find someone to dig the grave. When Anson Deo and Erastus Carpenter learned of his sorrow they told him to hurry on home to be with his wife and they would take care of everything.

The next morning John hauled the coffin down to the river's edge at eight o'clock where Charles was waiting to take it home. Then John waited until Charles returned with the body of his son. Eugene came with him and helped him lower the little coffin into the bottom of the boat and row it across the stream where it was loaded into John's wagon and the three men started for Hook's Point cemetery.

In the meantime, Anson, Erastus, Lewis Near and Wes Hook had dug the grave in a clearing in the thick brush of the cemetery and were waiting for the arrival of Charles and John. There was no minister available on such short notice for the town had no regular minister at this time, consequently there was no comforting words nor any flowers to soften the sad hour for the serious faced men and the lonely brother. The men removed their hats as the coffin was lowered into the grave and beyond any doubt, every one of them said a silent

prayer and when the grave was filled with the loose dirt the strong handclasps of the men was just as expressive of their sympathy as any words they might have said to the bereaved father and brother.

Sad and lonely though it was, this private funeral was undoubtedly the best thing that could have been done for the safety of the community. Although the people knew diptheria was "catchin'" like many other diseases, they did not realize fully how viciously contagious it was and quarantine was a future blessing that would come to these patient, long suffering people along with many others toward which they were working so faithfully and successfully.

The first Sunday in May, the Slattery family conducted funeral services for Clyde. Reverend Barr from Homer came down at their request and during the afternoon in the presence of a large group of sympathetic friends, the minister stood beside the newly erected grave stone and spoke kind and comforting words to the group. Truly all of them knew that while those on earth were now surrounded with all the beauties of nature, of flowers and birds and the promise of a new year, there was another home that was yet more beautiful, where there was no pain, no sorrow, no disappointment. Clyde was there, safe and happy, and they could not wish him back.

Chapter Twenty

The Glory of Hook's Point Fades

Immediately after the snow melted in the spring of '79, the task of surveying the land for the railroad between Stanhope and Dayton was begun. George Quiggle, as chief engineer, surveyed the land and his brother Ben, assisted by Tom Easley staked it out for the roadbuilder.

George boarded with Colonel Whitaker and the two men discussed the problem at length. Ben and Tom stayed at the Bowman hotel and all three engineers rode horseback to their location each day. George hired Finch to go with him through the prairie and thick timber to carry his books and instruments for in many places the hills and valleys were so rough and difficult to traverse that a horse was only a nuisance and the men made better time on foot.

Hewitt Ross was working very hard to induce the engineers to put the road through his place. He insisted on having it run right through the center of the land apparently with the idea of building the town on either side of the track, a shrewd business scheme for which no one could blame him. However, it was found that by placing the road bed in the best possible location in relation to Stanhope, then through the hills west of Rosstown and across the river to Dayton, the road should run about even with the north line of Hewitt's property. The engineer was willing to run it there and thus accept the right-of-way offered; but Ross would not agree to that. If the road could not go where he wanted it, he refused to give any land for the purpose. Consequently George ran the survey just north of Ross' property and left him out entirely.

The contract for building the road was given to Martin Flynn, one of the best road men of his time. He took the contract at the price of 40 cents a yard, and immediately moved his crew of men, 200 mule teams and as many horses on to the job. By the middle of the summer they had progressed to within a distance of three miles of Rosstown and were working near the Dick Stuart farm where the Frank Layton family had moved to escape the discomfort of the Light-house. Martin Flynn set up his camp and went on with his job of building a grade through the sloughs and swamps that looked almost impossible to those who had not seen him do it.

Cuts were made through the higher ground and this dirt was used to fill in the low places which were always filled with water. To load the dirt into the wagons, a loading trap was constructed, the wagon was pulled under it and the team and scraper driven over the plank floor. As soon as the team passed over the spring in the floor the dirt was dumped out of the scraper through the trap door and fell into the wagon below; then the load was hauled along the new grade and dumped at the end.

When the road advanced to the edge of a pond the men dumped the dirt into the water until it was above the surface of the water. In places the grade was seven feet in depth. The teams pulled the narrow, high-wheeled wagons over the grade, packing it down solidly and as they came to the end of the grade they dumped the dirt, drove the team off the steep end of the grade into the water, turned and went back for another load.

The work was very hard for both men and horses but gradually the road advanced along the surveyors stakes. Ot Layton worked every day and did a good job; Wid tried driving a team on the scraper but he had some difficulty handling the team of temperamental mules that were assigned to him. Just as the team was about to cross the trap door they would give a quick jump, Wid, unable to

tip the heavy scraper quickly enough, would find himself and the mules going down the other side of the trap with their load of dirt undumped. The team was too much for a frail lad of thirteen years to handle for Wid had not completely recovered from the effects of the diptheria. He was earning but 25 cents a day, a man and team were worth two dollars, so he told Martin he was quitting at the end of the second day.

Martin, a bit impatient and out of humor from the responsibility of his task, told him it was just as well, as he was about to fire him anyway. Wid took his 50 cents and was glad to be rid of the job. He would rather plow corn for Uncle Walt Milburn anytime for 25 cents a day.

By fall the road was complete as far as Rosstown, just before the usual autumn rains set in. West of Walt Milburn's place there was a regular lake where the water rose to such a height on both sides of the grade that it finally ran over the top. This brought doubt and apprehension to the entire community when the new grade lay under water and in their opinion it would certainly disintegrate in such a short time.

"I bet that railroad company will never lay a foot of track on that grade" snorted one of the more skeptical persons.

"Won't be any grade left by the time they get around to it," others agreed.

But they did not yet understand or appreciate the quality of Martin Flynn's work. After a couple more weeks when the weather changed and no more rains flooded the land, the water settled to a few inches below the surface of the grade. Then Martin started making bridges in these low places to allow the water to drain away to lower ground. The men cut piling in the timber and hauled them over to the grade where they were driven into the earth, some of them to a length of 25 feet. The floor was laid and the bridge completed, then a tunnel was dug through the grade under the bridge and in time the water washed out the grade beneath the bridge and the troubles were over.

As winter set in work had to be dropped until the next spring when the road would crawl along toward Dayton. But other things had been happening in the community affecting Hook's Point while the inhabitants of the little town watched with a solemn resignation the advance of the road. They realized the future effect on their fortunes and all the prospects for good, tied up in the little town, seemed to be fading.

Solomon Gleason passed away that summer and the responsibility of helping care for the family fell on the young, but willing shoulders of Lonse who was only 14 years old. Electa started teaching school and Viola planned to start as soon as she had finished her school work and passed her examinations. But Manley, Raish, Lydia, Charlotte and the baby, Edith, were still too small to help make the living. Lonse shouldered his extra burdens like a little man and when they needed flour he yoked old Buck and Barney, the ox team to the wagon and went to Bell's mill to get some flour milled from their wheat.

Lonse had gone many times with his father and always enjoyed watching the water run through the big wheel and fall with a great splash on the other side. It made a soft, musical sound as it rushed through the wheel and the wheel itself seemed to sing a soft song as it turned and ground the grain as if it were happy in its work of grinding grain into flour and meal for the boys and girls, those little pioneers who were strong and bore their burdens as bravely as the toughest man. Bell tended the mill and ground the wheat Lonse had brought, then sacked up the flour and put it in the wagon for him, keeping considerably less

than his share for the grinding as he had been known to do for many a worthy person.

The sun had already started its descent toward the western hills and Lonse knew he should be starting home. The pleasant surroundings of the mill and the jolly miller in his white garments was an interesting place to the boy so it was with reluctance that Lonse climbed into the wagon and cracked the big old whip over the backs of the oxen and yelled, "Giddap" to the nonchalant beasts who perked up their ears for a moment, and started out with their slow, lumbering gait for home.

Lonse rode along in the jolting wagon lost in daydreams of his visit at the mill, remembering the musical song of the water wheel and wishing he could spend a whole day there sometime and visit the men who came to have their grist ground. The time passed slowly as the faithful oxen kept up their steady walk along the wagon trail with seldom a word of command from their youthful driver. Suddenly Lonse noticed that the oxen were acting queerly and waking up from the depths of his pleasant absorption he saw a herd of oxen coming toward him as fast as they could run. Already his team was becoming excited and old Buck was beginning to paw the earth and snort angrily. Lonse moved fast as he jumped down from the wagon. He was acquainted with the problem from past experiences with his father on previous occasions. The farmers were in the habit of turning their cattle loose and allowing them to roam over the prairie where they could graze on the rank blue stem prairie grass. Gradually the oxen would begin grazing by themselves and finally start out to fight other oxen with whom they crossed paths.

Lonse knew what to do and the words of advice that his father had always impressed on his mind were as clear as if he were with him now.

"Unpin old Buck, and let him fight them," were Solomon's words and Lonse quickly jerked the pin out of the yoke and old Buck took a jump as he advanced toward the oncoming herd. The leader of the herd was a big old ox equally as large and fierce appearing as Buck but this did not cause the lone defender any alarm. With feet braced and his head lowered he met the attack bravely. The other oxen remained at a distance leaving the battle to their leader for the present.

Buck and his rival rammed their heads together viciously and their angry snorts caused chills to run up and down Lonse's back. He had no doubts that Buck would have no trouble whipping his enemy and yet there was the awful thought of what his predicament would be if old Buck failed him this time. He was a tough old critter and had emerged victoriously from many a similar encounter, and should be able to do it again, so with the innocent faith of youth Lonse waited patiently for the outcome.

After battering their heads together several times the two antagonists backed up and glared fiercely at each other. The other ox began to step around as if trying to figure out a new line of attack when Buck made a lunge at his side and nearly toppled the surprised beast over with the force of his attack. Before the other could regain his balance and return the assault Buck had him on the run and the defeated fighter left the scene of battle. But the other members of the herd seemed to be considering the idea of continuing the fight and the whole group made a few halting steps in Buck's direction with heads lowered and bellowing savagely, but Buck stood his ground.

With feet braced and his head thrust forward he glared at the oncoming horde with flaming eyes and ferocious snorts. When the leader was within a few yards of Buck, Lonse yelled, "Go for him, Buck!" and jumped up and down in the wagon

waving his arms excitedly. Spurred on by the commands of his small, but beloved master, Buck suddenly charged at the other animal with such a sudden movement that the leader backed up into the others, scattering the herd. Buck chased after them and they retreated like awkward deer trying to escape this avenging beast. When they had run several rods, old Buck returned to the wagon where Lonse was waiting. The tired, sweaty ox took his place beside Barney, Lonse put the pin through the yoke again and once more started for home. He made the remainder of the trip without further mishap, but was very glad when he was safely home again.

This year the Fourth of July celebration was again held in Johnny Johnson's pasture with the usual daytime entertainment, and a big dance was scheduled to take place in the evening on a bowery made of smooth boards from the sawmill. Ike and Finch had worked most of the day, planning to do their celebrating at night by attending the dance. For some time Ike had been escorting Maggie Whitaker to social affairs in the neighborhood and Finch had been trying very hard to make a favorable impression on Elizabeth Near. The four young people often went together, the boys taking turns furnishing the team and buggy.

Finch was expecting to drive this evening so Ike was suppose to come to his home and they would then go together after the girls. Ike was late in coming and it was dark when he arrived at Finch's home; as he stepped inside the door, Finch took one look at Ike's disheveled appearance and burst out laughing despite the disgusted look on Ike's face.

"What in the world ever happened to you, Ike?" he asked. "You look like you had fallen into a mudhole. You're a pretty lookin' sight to be expectin' to take a girl to a dance."

"All right, laugh, if you think it is funny for anyone to fall in the mud," Ike said dejectedly.

"Well, it's too bad of course, but how did you do such a thing?"

"Oh, I just fell in the ditch, that's all. Why wouldn't a man fall down when everybody's cattle are lying along the road so he can't find a safe place to walk in the dark. Everything went wrong tonight anyhow, I was late, and now this had to happen. All of Wes Hook's and Dr. Stuart's cattle are lying along the road and in the dark, I stumbled over one of the cows and fell in the ditch that was half full of water and mud."

Finch started laughing again at the ludicrous appearance, Ike made and this added to Ike's irritation.

"Well, laugh, why don't you suggest something, smarty. I can't go looking like this and it's my only suit, so quit laughing and start thinking."

"You could wash your face and hands and comb your hair, that would help some, and maybe we could wipe some of the dirt off your clothes."

"No, we can't," Ike insisted, "I'm absolutely soaked from the knees down and I don't think Maggie would care to sit on my lap all the way to the dance. Think again, that won't do."

"Maybe you could wear that old suit of Will's that he left here, he is about the same size as you and it would fit you better than one of mine."

"All right, trot it out here, don't just stand there. We're late now."

Finch brought the suit and the boys decided it would have to do. Ike washed the mud off his face and hands, then put on the suit which didn't fit so badly and as the lights would be rather dim anyway, no one would be apt to notice. His shoes were wet too but he cleaned them as well as he could and making Finch promise not to tell anyone of his experience, the boys hurried away to get the girls, then on to the dance.

M. D. Bramon played for the dance and the floor was crowded for every number. The girls looked like lovely queens as they bowed and courtesied to their partners in the square dance, and moved with such ease and grace in the round dances. Elizabeth looked like a doll, she was little and dainty, and moved with quick, fairylike grace; her brown curls made a pretty frame for her sparkling eyes while the charm of her happy smile completely captivated Finch. Though he had gone with several of the young ladies he knew, and enjoyed their company, he had never before been seriously interested in any of them.

Perhaps he had some of the romantic ideas of Eva Milburn and thought there was one special person in the world for him. He felt sure now that he had found her, but of course it was much too soon to tell her. Elizabeth had too many responsibilities at home for her to be free to think of her own future, also she was only 18, so Finch understood that he must wait for a long time but in the meantime he could have the pleasure of taking her places and giving her as much happiness as he could.

Finch worked on the road during the summer and late into the fall. Elizabeth taught the Nickerson school east of town where Tressie and Eva Layton, Fred and John Brandt, Frank, Dave, Oscar and Minnie Lund were a few of her many scholars. When the fall rains filled the sloughs with water and soaked the sod and wagon roads, the teacher and pupils had a difficult time going to and from school. The Lund children had their choice of walking a rail fence or crossing on a brush bridge.

The rail fence along the road made a precarious footbridge for the pupils when the water covered the road, and for a distance of perhaps 30 yards they walked on the top and second rail, and part of the time the second rail was covered with two or three inches of water so by the time they had made the crossing their feet would be wet.

The brush bridge was better during the dry seasons but it made a longer trip. This makeshift bridge was constructed of fine brush piled to a depth of three or four feet, being deeper in the center of the slough. A few boards were laid on top of the brush and straw laid over them. It made a fairly good bridge until the wet season started then after a day's rain the water would have risen above the bridge when the children attempted to cross it. When they stepped on the floating straw it was pushed down onto the boards and when they lifted their feet it rose again to the surface of the water. Only by experience could they manage to cross without stepping through the straw and boards and the brush beneath, but fortunately they always managed to cross safely. When they reached home their boots and shoes were watersoaked and must be dried out after being painfully removed on the family bootjack.

The teacher had her difficulties too, coming from a greater distance and encountering the same kind of sloughs and mudholes. One night Finch went to call on Elizabeth and as usual found her busy with household tasks. Brushing the curls from her flushed brow, she invited him to come in with one of those weary, yet sweetly patient smiles that always aroused Finch's deepest sympathy and desire to do something for her.

"You look tired tonight, Elizabeth; why don't you let the other girls do

more of the work?" he asked as he took the chair she placed for him beside the kitchen table.

"They do try to help, but they are young yet and don't have much time either when they are going to school," she replied as she went on stirring up a cake. "There is so much to do for a big family like this, sometimes I think I shouldn't have tried to teach school but the money helps out so much I don't like to quit."

"No, you just try to do your share and everyone else's too," said Finch. "How are you getting along with all your pupils?"

"Oh, just fine, they are all so good and help me so much. The girls insist on sweeping the floor and the boys carry all the wood and water too so I don't have it so hard after I get there."

"I'm glad to hear that, because you have enough to do anyway."

Elizabeth poured the cake batter into a pan and set it in the elevated oven to bake, she washed the dishes she had used then sat down to visit. The other children had gone into the other room and the two serious young people were alone with their problems.

"Do you feel like going anywhere tonight, down to Maggie's or over to Minnie Lane's?" Finch asked.

"If it doesn't make any difference to you, I'd rather just stay home," she replied.

"I like it here better than any place too," Finch said, "But I thought I would ask you anyway."

They had spent many evenings like this since the school term had been in progress, for Elizabeth was usually too tired or too busy to go anywhere and begged to just stay home and rest or knit or darn socks while they visited. This was agreeable to Finch but the heavy burdens she had to carry on her small shoulders distressed him very much, and he wished there was something he could do to ease the load just a little. So under the pressure of this desire to help her he threw caution to the winds and speaking very earnestly, told her what was in his heart.

"Elizabeth," he said softly, "listen to me a minute and forgive me for speaking, but I do want to help you. As you probably know I love you very much and it distresses me to see you so tired and overburdened. I wish you would marry me and let me carry some of the responsibility."

"Oh, Finch, I couldn't," she cried.

"You mean you don't care for me at all," asked Finch.

"No, it isn't that. I think you are the grandest person I know but I haven't dared let myself think about you very much because it is so hopeless."

"No, it isn't," Finch insisted. "You could marry me and give up your school and stay here at home and it would be much easier---"

"Oh, no," she interrupted, "I couldn't do that. It wouldn't be fair to you or to me. I can't leave these children for a long time yet, they are too young and papa needs me here too, he is no earthly good around the house. It wouldn't

work out for us to get married and me to stay here and work when I should be with you. We wouldn't be happy."

"I suppose that is true too," Finch agreed dejectedly. "You are wiser than I. It wouldn't be right to leave these kids alone yet and you don't seem to mind so much, you never complain, you're so unselfish and noble."

"No, I'm not always so. Don't think it isn't a temptation to forget my duties and put my responsibilities on your willing shoulders but we can't always do what we like and I know you understand because you have carried your share of work and worry too. And, Finch, I truly believe that we will gain much by our sacrifice, that whatever we may think we are losing may be returned in the stronger characters thus forged, the deeper understanding and appreciation of the true values of life. Sometimes unselfish service to others brings us greater happiness and rewards than any pleasure we might derive from always following our own inclinations and doing as we please or choosing the easiest path. We are young and strong yet, we can think of ourselves later."

As she spoke, Elizabeth's face seemed to shine with the glory of her noble spirit and high ideals that seemed to uplift Finch too and erase from his mind all his uneasiness and concern for her welfare. He was convinced that she had the courage, the strength and the character to carry on gaily, contentedly and successfully.

"You are a wonderful girl, Elizabeth," Finch said "I should have known that you would never give up your job, but I am glad we talked it over and understand each other so well. We can have something to look forward to together and it will be easier, won't it?"

"Indeed it will, and I am sure that waiting will only make more precious the final realization of our dreams."

Both were lost in thought for a moment until the sweet smell of ginger bread permeated the atmosphere and brought Elizabeth back to the very prosaic present.

"Oh, my cake!" she exclaimed, jumping up and opening the oven door. "Its all right, though; molasses always smells like it is burning."

She set the cake on the table to cool and the rich, tangy smell filled the room as she sat down to continue the conversation.

"I've been thinking," Finch remarked, "there is one thing I can do that might help you some. You can ride a horse can't you?"

"Well, I can keep from falling off, at least," she replied with a smile.

"All right, I'm going to bring that pony of mine over and you can ride him to school; that will help some, won't it?"

"That would be wonderful, but which pony is it, Finch?"

"You know. It's that kind of mouse-colored one that I ride sometimes, the one I call Bellfounder."

"Bell--what?" asked Elizabeth in consternation.

"Bellfounder." Finch repeated with a grin.

"Bellfounder!" Elizabeth exclaimed again, "Where did you ever get such a

name for a horse? I wonder it lived."

"Well, that's quite a story," Finch explained. "When she was a colt, I named her Molly. One day she got out of the pasture and ran away, I thought I never was going to find her, I hunted for two days and was beginning to think someone had stolen her. Then one day as I was hunting up on Lakeskillet, I saw her standing in the barn lot at Eph Dillow's place back in the timber. I went to the house and asked the folks if they knew whose colt that was."

"Nope, we don't, Eph said. "T'other day, Bell, that's my wife, went out to gather up some kindlin' wood to cook dinner and she saw the colt standin' all alone down by the crick. It seemed tame so she coaxed it down to the barn and shut it up. We didn't know its name so we started callin' it "Bellfounder" after my wife, just in fun, you know. "I thought somebody sure would be a comin' after it. She's a right good colt, young feller."

I told him I thought so too and offered to pay him for taking care of the colt but he wouldn't take anything so I thanked him and came on home. Since then I always called the colt Bellfounder, and I expect the crazy name will always stick to her."

"It is a unique name; I'm sure no other horse has one like it," Elizabeth said. "I will be very glad to ride her if you can spare her because it is the long walk that tires me out so much. I can go more quickly too, I certainly appreciate your kindness."

"It isn't anything at all, I'm glad to do it," Finch declared happily. "I'll bring her over in the morning," then as the clock struck half-past nine, he added, "I expect it is time for me to be leaving."

"Oh no, you have to stay and have some of this gingerbread."

"Please don't bother, Lib; you can use it so well tomorrow."

"Maybe so, but there is no one who deserves a hunk of this cake any more than you do; now just wait while I make some coffee. You might be surprised Finch, if you only knew how much it means to me to have a shoulder to lean on when I need it, and I do need it many times, so it's only a very small expression of my gratitude."

Elizabeth made the coffee and they ate the lunch in the most carefree mood, absorbed in their own interests and for a time forgetful of the serious side of life, having the glorious optimism of youth that is the greatest factor in successfully facing and surmounting the obstacles of this life.

Elizabeth traveled back and forth to school easily thereafter on her trusty pony, and was very happy about her situation. Finch's solicitude about her welfare was very sweet to her and buoyed up her weary spirit at all times.

Bellfounder was a fast little traveler, gentle and responsive to Elizabeth's every wish, but sometimes she found the mudholes difficult to get through. In places the earth looked solid but would be spongy and soft, the pony sank to its knees and in lifting its feet to make the next step would almost topple over before completing the step. Then Elizabeth would dismount and, being small and light in weight, the ground would sustain her as she led the pony and helped it out of the mire, after which she mounted and rode on again.

Cold weather came and froze the mud in rough, wavy chunks and later the snow blew across the prairie, stinging the cheeks of the teacher and her pupils as they prepared to go home. Elizabeth led the pony out of the small barn at the schoolhouse, and started home at a brisk trot. She let the pony set its own pace and in a short time was safe at her own home. Deep drifts piled on the prairie and the two faithful companions floundered and plunged through them in their task of teaching brave boys and girls the rudiments of reading, writing, spelling and arithmetic.

Finally another winter wore away and spring arrived, bringing a confused feeling of progress and of obstruction, of hope and of frustration. As soon as the weather permitted, Martin Flynn prepared to start the roadwork again, laying the foundation for the railroad that was the biggest asset on the country and yet spelled the doom of the ambitious little town that was already beginning to feel the effects of the new era.

The interest of the people was no longer centered in Hook's Point but in the possible location of the new town that would surely spring into being and grow and live through many years to come. Like a fire that has burned in all the glory of necessity and fulfillment of purpose, and is left to die slowly down to a few glowing embers, and finally dwindle to ashes, so the hopes and the glory of Hook's Point had reached their height and the little town now began its trail into the oblivion of forgotten dreams and of futility and cessation of struggle.

Chapter Twenty-One

Building the Railroad

Martin Flynn and his crew of workmen continued to blaze a trail through the prairie and on to the timber as the wet, chilly days of April passed by and the warm, pleasant days of May brought fine weather and improved working conditions.

Filling in the sloughs with dirt and making the grade east of Rosstown had been a tremendous task the year before, but it was easy as compared to the bigger job of working through the hills and ravines and grubbing out the timber toward the west.

A small crew of men went ahead to clear away all the underbrush and trees along the right-of-way. Men with razor sharp axes cut down the smaller trees, trimmed off the limbs and laid the logs in piles outside the roadway. Other men with crosscut saws set to work on the big old monarchs of the timber. The buzzing sound of the saws could be heard as two men worked with a steady "to and fro" movement and after several moments the loud crash of the tree as it fell to earth was heard above the roar of the noisy laborers and echoed back from the distant hills. Next these trees were trimmed and pulled off the course with teams.

The stumps remained as an obstacle and had to be dynamited; carefully the men set the charge of explosives, then stood back at a safe distance as the dynamite blasted the huge stumps and rocks, sending pieces of rock, splinters of the stump, and dirt sailing high in the air. Slowly the workmen forged ahead and the fine, solid grade reached the edge of the hills. Here the grubbing had to be done and big cuts made through the slopes and the low places filled in with the dirt.

Men and horses sweat as they toiled with the slippery clay and plastered themselves with the yellow substance. When it rained the clay became more slippery and the hardest part of the work for the men and animals was the effort to stand up on the uneven ground. The clay stubbornly refused to respond to their efforts to work it loose. They could not plow it easily nor shovel it as it seemed to cling together like rubber. Martin called it "joint clay" and much of it had to be chopped and hacked loose before they could handle it at all. This took up extra time and made harder work on what was already an almost superhuman task.

The deeper cuts looked like canyons and each scraper of dirt looked like a drop in the bucket as it was dumped into the cavernous opening. Load after load was dumped, and to the weary men the job seemed impossible of completion. Finally one of the men, who had charge of a crew which was working farther away from the others, lost his patience and instructed the men to dump some trees in and cover them with dirt. But secrets have a troublesome habit of leaking out and somehow Martin found out about it that night. Early the next morning he sent a man there with instructions to remove the trees at once, or dire consequences would result to somebody.

Martin was an honest, conscientious man and proud of his work and no road-builder with a good reputation like his would allow such a thing to pass. It would take more time and cost money but his pride in his profession came first. Knowing his boss and realizing there was no alternative, the unfortunate man and his partners in bad judgment, grimly went to work and extracted the trees from the grade. It was hard, disgusting work but there was an element of

comedy about their situation that smoothed off the raw edges of their disgust. They accepted the good-natured razzing of their comrades with the jolly companionship so necessary to the success of any great enterprise. No one passed up an opportunity to have some fun.

Mules were "ornery, stubborn critters" at best and their ambition was not a natural tendency but an enforced necessity. They were tough, gritty animals and could stand as much hard work as the horses and do it easier in hot weather. But work held no special appeal for them and they merely kept going at their driver's insistence. They did not have the horse's pride in their strength or ability, nor the earnest desire to serve their master faithfully. They did their work only because they had to and stopped at the first opportunity.

A small, tough, weatherbeaten old veteran of the road work, named Jake was always up to some trick and he could stop every mule on the job when he wanted to. Work ordinarily stopped about 15 minutes of twelve and the men fed and watered the horses and mules. Just to annoy the boss, Jake would stop the mules about fifteen minutes earlier by letting out a loud "Hee-haw" in a very realistic imitation of a braying mule. Every mule would stop in its tracks and refuse to budge so there was nothing the men could do, but unhitch them and take care of them, which pleased everyone but the boss. Jake was careful not to pull this trick too often, giving Martin time to forget the last offense before committing another.

Quitting time, at noon and at night, were the high spots of the day. The tired men repaired to the shade of the tree to lie on the grass and eat their lunch if they came from a distance. Some of the men had their families along and lived in a wagon shack or tent; others hired a cook and when he pounded on an old tin lid to call them to dinner they made a wild dash to the cook shack and noisily took their places at the rude table where the huge dishes of potatoes, meat, beans, biscuits and coffee, and other things disappeared like magic.

Thirteen men boarded at the Bowman hotel in Hook's Point and Mrs. Bowman put up 13 lunches every day besides cooking breakfast and supper for them. Elizabeth Bramon helped her and every day several loaves of golden brown bread came out of the oven on the big cook stove along with pie and cake for the lunches.

On Saturday nights and Sunday groups of the men rode into town from the camp to visit with those who were staying in town and to join in the village fun. There was no tavern in town so the Near and Carpenter stores as well as the two hotels did a big business in candy, gum, cigars and chewing tobacco. The squeak of the tobacco cutter was a familiar sound as the storekeeper clamped the blade down on a length of Yankee Girl or J. T. plug tobacco and cut off a hunk of the strong smelling stuff.

Old Jake always took home a big supply so there would be no possibility of his running short before the end of the week. He would grab up the first plug and take a big chew, experiencing some difficulty in biting off a portion of the tough substance with the two teeth on the right side of his mouth and having to pull and twist for a time before finally accomplishing the job.

"Pretty good tobacco, eh, Jake?" William Whiteman always asked with a smile and the comical little man always answered the same:

"Betcher life, good old J. T. For Jakey and the first plug off the chunk is the best."

"You'd have a dickens of a time if you couldn't get any for a week, wouldn't you Jake?"

"You're right, young feller. Me and old J. T. has wrangled more mules than you've swatted flies. Jes as well quit workin' if I ain't got no tobaccy."

"Why, old timer?"

"Cause, they jes natcherly go together. Mules are stubborn and would try the patience of an angel. Well, if I got a chaw of tobaccy to kind of keep my mouth busy I can't spend all my time hollerin' at the brutes and irritatin' them. Kinda gives me somethin' to do and lets off steam when I get so all fired mad at 'em. So you see if I ain't got no tobaccy I couldn't skin mules and if I couldn't skin mules, I couldn't do nothin' 'cause that'all I know."

"Hm, well, I think you'd get along all right, Jake. Here is your stuff sure that's all you need?" William asked.

The old man gave William a sly wink and in a low tone of voice asked,

"Got any more of them bitters like I got last week?"

"Yes, sir , I saved a bottle for you."

He gave the small sack containing the bottle to Jake who put it in his hip pocket.

"Poor excuse for likker, ain't a kick in a carload, but it helps to cut the clay dust out of a man's throat and that's worth something. Thanks, son. Here's your money."

Jake took his sack and, patting his hip pocket to be sure his bottle of bitters was safe, turned and walked out through the door where he joined another group of men engaged in conversation.

On Sunday afternoon, the young men of the neighborhood came to town to take part in the fun and games. George Scott, Lonse Gleason, Ot and Wid Layton, the Whitaker boys, Finch and Ike Hook and men from the road gang played horseshoe, baseball and ran races while the residents of the town sat on seats in front of their stores and homes and watched the fun.

Some of the more daring boys stretched a rope across the street from two poles and walked across, to the horror of the more timid spectators. They were strong and quick and never fell though they performed many tricks on the rope.

So with hard work and a little pleasure, the road work continued. The new grade reached the Des Moines River then started up the hill on the other side and slowly but surely crept along and finally reached Dayton late in the fall. The bridge across the river had to be built and the high water most of the summer had made this work impossible. However, the fall of '80 was unusually dry, there were no heavy rains to swell the stream and the water level was at the lowest stage the people could remember.

Lumber for the heavy braces was cut and hauled to the sawmill and then the snow started falling. One layer after another until it reached a depth of four feet on the level, but still the work went on,

Olaf Angstrom joined the gang and helped cut piling. The men cut the biggest, straightest trees for those heavy pillars that must support the weight of the train and the fury of the river. Those giant trees some of them 40 feet in length fell with a crash in the solemn stillness of the cold, lonely forest. The men stood back out of harm's way while they watched the proud sentinel of the timber waver as the last few strokes of the axe sealed its fate, and slowly the tree leaned heavily and then fell swiftly to earth sending up a cloud of the white snow as it lay nearly buried in its soft bed.

For a moment the men stood as if transfixed at the result of their handiwork. For countless years the tree had been growing proudly and magnificently welcoming the birds as they came north again to build their nests and raise their young in the heavy foliage of leaves. Squirrels scrambled up its giant trunk and hid among its branches when the hunters came too close. Since it had been only a small sapling it had fought its way, growing fiercely and stubbornly to rear its topmost branches above those of other trees and had won the battle, standing for uncounted years taller, bigger and prouder than all the other trees.

Now it lay, a fallen monarch, its sun had set, its race was run. No more would it welcome the robins and the bluebirds and wish it might scold the woodpecker that had no respect for its perfect bark coat and beat a steady tattoo as it bored for worms. But the tree had served one purpose, now it must serve another equally as great. It was not being sacrificed, for it would now serve good people and worthy people, it was being prepared for a new mission in the world. It was lucky after all.

Lightning might have struck it and ripped its sturdy trunk leaving it to rot and die where it had grown so proudly and happily, or someone might have burned it piece by piece in a fireplace and there would be only ashes to scatter to the four winds and be forgotten. No, the king of the forest was not dead, it would enjoy a new kind of service near its old home. Perhaps trees do not think of these things, perhaps men do not think of these things or would feel embarrassed if they expressed such thoughts. Perhaps they cover them up in a nonchalant attitude as did these men.

"Just look at that tree, it's perfect. Straight as an Indian arrow and smooth as a floor," one man said as he started cutting off the limbs.

"It sure is a beauty," said Olaf. "It will take an awful big ice cake to make a dent in that one."

Quickly the men trimmed the limbs, then fastened a log chain to the biggest end, hitched a strong team to that and pulled the tree to the river bank where the piles were being driven into the frozen ground. Through cold weather and snow the work went on and the bridge was finished when the Chinook winds blew in from the south and the snow began to settle and tiny trickles of water ran from the drifts making small streams that grew in volume as the days passed.

The men who had toiled through the winter days with numb fingers and toes, and cheeks fiery red from the bitter cold, watched anxiously as the water rose in the river and the ice threatened to go out at any minute. The warm weather melted the snow so rapidly that all the country resembled a great lake and the streams and rivers overflowed with their usual wild abandon, apparently in an effort to test at once the bridge builder's skill. The water reached new heights, surging over lowlands and sweeping in an angry torrent past the piling of the new bridge. Great cakes of ice crashed into them and bounced back to work their vicious way around them and on down the stream while crowds

of people watched and waited. But the bridge stood, strong, sturdy, unshakeable, a silent tribute to the brave men who had built this monument to their worthy efforts.

Now the grade was finished and immediately the work of placing the ties was started, coming from the east as did the road work. Martin Flynn was through with his part of the work. Long before he had finished he realized that he had taken the contract entirely too cheap at 40 cents a year. The railroad company understood the tremendous amount of work and money that had been expended on the road so they doubled his pay, raising it to 80 cents a yard. Even then when Martin had paid all his expenses he found that he had been forced to use a large amount of his own capital and not only had he failed to make any money, he had lost all he had before and finished the job with his finances in bad shape. All he had to comfort him in his loss was his pride in the wonderful engineering feat he had accomplished, working through the sloughs and ponds, through hills and ravines and the tough, joint clay that required many more hours of work than ordinary black soil or the soft, loose timber soil.

But there were other roads to be built so he moved his crew of men, horses and mules to the next job and Jake Olmstead and his sons, Nate and Clark took the contract for hauling in the ties. As they moved along they moved their camp and a few miles east of Rosstown, located it close to the home of Frank Layton. Wid and Ot spent every leisure moment watching the men and teams as they worked just in advance of the engine pulling a flat car full of ties.

Jake and his boys each drove a fine team of horses and they unloaded the ties from the flatcar on to their wagons taking their turn. Each man threw off the ties on his wagon and other men laod them in place and spiked them down securely. When the wagon was finally empty the driver carefully drove the team off the grade then went back for another load. The horses waded through the muddy sloughs, splashing the turbid water high up on their sides as they struggled through the boggy mess that sucked at their hoofs as they lifted their feet and set them down with calm indifference.

Right behind the crew of men setting the ties came the engine pulling a flat car of rails. These were laid in place and fastened securely and the railroad was fast becoming a reality.

Each night the weary men and horses returned to their camp and although Jake, Nate and Clark were tired and hungry themselves they always took care of their teams before they ate their own supper. The horses would be dirty and sweaty, their legs and sides caked with mud, so each man washed off all the mud and slough water then rubbed the horses dry with old sacks. Then they combed and curried them until their smooth coats were clean and shiny from this careful grooming. The men regarded their horses not only as beasts of burden but as pardners in a business. Jake had taught his sons to love their horses with the same pride and affection that he did. He handled his team with patience and kindness, coaxing and encouraging them to give the best of which they were capable in work and loyalty. These teams never felt the lash of a whip, nor were startled or made nervous by sharp, angry words. When they were driven off the steep sides of the grade, Jake held the lines steadily and spoke softly, easily, with no nervous or exciting tone of voice to frighten the team, which trusted its master to watch for its safety. The horses were turned loose to graze and roll on the ground after they had been fed their grain and given their water, then the men thought of their own comfort. They washed and changed from their soiled work clothes to clean garments and sat down to a good supper that Mr. Olmstead prepared in the cook shack.

The railroad company started to build a depot before the rails were laid as far as Rosstown by which the location of the new town was usually designated. However, it was generally agreed that a new name would have to be chosen since Hewitt Ross and the company had had their mild difficulties and the company would hardly do Hewitt the favor of naming the town after him even if he had cared for the honor. He did not see where he was going to benefit any by the new railroad and didn't care what it did.

For some time the company had been considering the name of Stratford which had been suggested by a man from Stratford, Pennsylvania, who had worked for George Quiggle. It was a good, plain name and people began to think of the new town as Stratford.

For some reason, whether accidental or intentional, or to annoy Ross the new depot was built in the middle of the road beside the track thereby cutting off all travel to Rosstown from the north which served to further alienate him from the new town. The name "Stratford" was painted in big white letters on east and west ends of the brown two-room-two story structure and the new depot was ready for business. The rails were laid all the way to Dayton by the last of August and the people were impatiently awaiting the time when the first train would come steaming down the track. The men who worked on the rails rode their handcars out to their location and a ride on one of these was a rare treat especially to children.

When they worked past the Layton place Wid and Eva had become acquainted with some of the men and often rode into Stratford on the handcar and back again, whizzing along at what seemed an amazing rate of speed.

The business men of Hook's Point realized the value of being on the spot at the critical time and did not wait until the train service had started while they would stand a good chance of being cheated out of a good future by getting there too late. All summer they worked at moving buildings or making plans to go elsewhere. Hook's Point was no longer a town of promise or opportunity, all interest was centered in the new town.

Anson Deo sold the hotel building to Dr. Stuart who planned to use it for a home, replacing the old log structure. He then bought Carpenter's store, put skids under it and moved it to Stratford, where he expected to run his hotel business and continue the dances in the hall above. William and Mary Whiteman were attracted by the possibilities offered by the town of Lehigh which was now a flourishing little village along the banks of the Des Moines River several miles to the north and west of Hook's Point.

Finch had steady work with his team, helping put skids under other of the buildings and moving them to the new town. Dwelling houses and store buildings were gradually taken away to be lined up along the north and south street of Stratford. Because of the location of the depot in the middle of the road, all the new town naturally lay on the north side of the track. In the space of a few weeks the storekeepers were ready for business and only the regular arrival of the train was lacking to give the place the dignity of a prosperous town with an established future.

At last the first train was scheduled to pass through Stratford, bringing the mail at four o'clock in the afternoon. Everyone in the country knew of the exciting event that was to take place and scores of people went to town to be the first to see it pull into the station. Many of the people living along the railroad track were content to stay at home and watch it from the time they could see the black smudge rising from the smokestack in the distance until it went rushing by with a loud, shrill whistle of greeting to the people.

watching, then all too soon, passing out of sight in the west, its trail of smoke resembling a thin, wispy black thread as it vanished in the air.

The big black monster that came chugging into the station and slowly halted beside the platform of the depot was a frightful thing to the horses that were tied securely to hitching posts. They looked with alarm at the strange apparition as it came closer and many of the men ran to hold them if they should become too frightened. The loud ringing of the bell and the shrill whistling of the train as it came to a stop added to their fright and some of the men had difficulty in holding their horses for a time. But after a few moments the horses became quiet and stood still, yet they did not trust this strange thing completely and kept an alert, watchful eye on it all the time snorting occasionally in disgust at the people who crowded around such a fierce thing.

Henry Lucas made a short speech in honor of the occasion then the mail bags were taken from the baggage car, and the members of the crowd shouted as they tried to carry on a conversation with the passengers who filled the one coach and found it difficult to hear anything in the general excitement and confusion. This was a momentous occasion, the realization of a great dream that the settlers had carried in their minds for many long years, this was a fond wish that had finally been fulfilled and in the heart of every man, woman and child there was a great joy and appreciation of all the things the railroad meant to their cherished community and to the future of themselves and succeeding generations.

For many years the good people had waited and worked and hoped for this day and now it was here, not exactly as they would have chosen it perhaps, because it meant starting over for some of them and giving up their allegiance to the friendly little place they had known as Hook's Point but nothing came easily or very often according to plan for the early pioneer. He was used to work and defeat, of picking up the remnants of shattered dreams and starting over, of being content with less than he had wished for but thankful for what he got. It was not the pioneer philosophy to look backward with regret at the might-have-beens, he looked always to the future. Each man had played an integral part in the progress of the community, however, small or apparently insignificant it seemed, but without him the picture would have been incomplete. Stratford was not a new town exactly, it was merely a continuance of Hook's Point, only the location was different, the same high ideals and honest effort and invincible spirit would go on and on in the capable hands and hearts of those who were strong in courage.

For an hour after the train had gone the crowd lingered in that friendly companionable way, that intangible spirit of brotherhood whereby each person enjoyed everything more when sharing the pleasure with others. Then, one by one, family groups climbed into the wagons and surreys and buggies and started home.

Mandy, Finch and Elizabeth rode along the old stagecoach road that led to Hook's Point, all busy with their own thoughts. They drove past the Whitaker farm, resplendent as ever with all its fine buildings; horses and cattle roamed in the pasture and level fields of corn were slowly reaching maturity in the September sunshine. They drove down the shallow ravine road, up past the crossroads, and the place looked lonesome. The corner store was gone, the Deo Hotel, Bowman's Hotel, no merry shouts of school children greeted them for the building was gone to be a part of the new town. Few of the buildings were left. Deo's house was empty, the old Robert's store was gone and Bramon's new house, all those on the west side too except Carpenter's fine new home; he would live there until spring then move to a farm - Hook's Point - a deserted

village.

The old drugstore still stood on the sidehill but Will and Eliza would soon move away too. On the level ground just north of the ravine was the most familiar spot, the four white oak trees standing as straight and sturdy as they had 32 years ago when Isaac and Jim had pitched their camp near them on that cool October day. The brick house was part of the past, something that time had not changed, nor would change easily.

"Home again," Mandy said thoughtfully, as Finch stopped the horses. "Somehow it looks more like home, like it did when your father lived, Finch, and when we built this house; it was quiet here then like it is now."

"Do you like it better this way, mother, or would you like to move to Stratford now that it is such a popular place?" Finch asked.

"No, I don't want to move, I like it here and always have. I'm satisfied and that is all that counts. But we have company, Finch," she said starting to get out of the buggy, "we must not lose ourselves in our own thoughts and interests. Come in, Elizabeth, and we will get some supper while Finch does the chores, because I suppose you young folks will be wanting to start to the dance early."

"We probably will have to go early if we expect to get in the hall," Elizabeth answered with a bright smile. "Everyone will be there on such a nice evening. I think it was just grand of Anson to give -- a free dance as a kind of celebration for the railroad, don't you?"

"Yes, it was, but he has been here for several years and know so many people, it will be just like a big family party. I hope you will have a good time, I know you don't have time to go to many parties Elizabeth."

"Oh, I will have a wonderful time, but aren't you going along?"

"No, dear. I've had quite enough excitement for one day so I'll enjoy staying home with my thoughts and memories."

"They are good ones, aren't they, Mrs. Hook, although they weren't all easy ones or happy ones."

"No, they weren't easy years as I look back but they were good years after all. We are better people for our sacrifices and service, we never have time to grow selfish or narrowminded. But these are such sober thoughts for you and me to be thinking," Mandy said as she tied on her gingham apron and shook the ashes down in the cookstove preparatory to starting a fire.

"They are good thoughts, Mrs. Hook and I do understand how you feel I am glad to talk like this to you, I've missed my own mother and I feel that you can take her place. I suppose that Finch has told you about us -- about our plans --." Elizabeth paused in confusion.

"Yes, and I am very happy for both of you."

"Of course, we won't be married for a couple of years but time goes fast and we are happy this way too."

"There is plenty of time, you are both young and you will be glad you did not shirk your duty. Finch will have more to start farming with by that time and it will be easier. He has two new calves, why don't you go out and see them

and talk to him while he finishes chores. I'll have supper ready when you come in."

"I'd love to" she said and went out through the yard.

When Finch and Elizabeth arrived at the dance a big crowd had already gathered. The women and girls had gone on up to the hall and taken seats along the wall while the men remained downstairs in front of the building to talk until the dance started. All the old crowd was there, young folks and those who had been married in late years, then others who had grown up seemingly all at once. There was Ed Stuart who had outgrown some of his boyish mischievousness, Lonse, Electa, Viola and Manley Gleason; Maude and Ed Near and others from the country

Claude Deo played his cello and Charlies was beginning to play regularly on the little lap organ. Anson tuned up his fiddle and the crowd was ready to dance at once. In such a group people had to take their turns. Ot Layton danced occasionally but he liked better to watch Anson play; he was learning to play some tunes himself and sometimes Anson let him play for one of the dances. Wid was too young to care much about dancing; like Ot he was more interested in listening to the music because he was also showing promise of being a good fiddler.

During intermission, Anson let him take the violin and play some of the more simple tunes like Turkey in the Straw and Pop, Goes the Weasel and Wid reached the heights of earthly bliss. His one ambition was to learn to play well enough so he could play all the tunes Anson did, and someday furnish music in such perfect rhythm and time that people could get the pleasure in dancing that the crowds always did when Anson played.

When it was time to resume the dance, Wid relinquished the violin with secret reluctance, but thanking Anson from the bottom of his heart.

"Keep it up, Wid, and you'll make a fiddler someday, and a good one too." Anson said with an affectionate smile at the boy, for he understood the desire that burned in the lad to bring music from the violin since he had always enjoyed it more than anything else he ever did himself.

The dance continued until late in the morning, when Anson's arm began to ache from the constant motion, and his head dropped sleepily as it often did. Anyone would declare that he was playing in his sleep and probably he was. So, Stratford made its debut into the world and never knew the struggles that its predecessor had known.

Chapter Twenty-Two

Inspiration to Happiness

The train passed close to the little prairie home of Walter and Eva Milburn during the winter days, whistling shrilly as it approached the crossing only a few rods from the house, then quickly disappearing from view, leaving a trail of smoke on the frosty air.

One morning as Walter, Eva and Nellie sat at the breakfast table, the train went rushing past with its rumbling noise and the last notes of the whistle seemed to echo back with a mournful, lonely sound.

Eva set her coffee cup down on the saucer with an involuntary shudder.

"That train makes me lonesome, Walter," she said in a strange voice that was entirely new to the not too observant Walter.

"Lonesome?" he asked, not quite comprehending what she meant.

"Yes, I think that is what it is; it makes me unhappy or disturbs my thoughts, or something. I don't know just how to describe it but it seems to interfere with my privacy. You won't understand because no one else could have such queer thoughts as I do."

"No, I'm afraid I don't quite understand. Don't you like it here any more; aren't you satisfied?"

"I don't know," she replied stirring her coffee absently. "Maybe it is just imagination but I don't find the pleasure in living that I used to."

"Is it anything I'm doing or neglecting to do, Eva, that makes you unhappy?" Walter asked anxiously.

"Of course not. Oh, just forget it. Maybe I simply want to go home for a visit. I haven't seen Mother for a long time; could we go today?"

"Sure, I never thought about it, why didn't you mention it before, I'll take you anytime when I have the time," he said getting his coat and cap.

"How could I tell you when I didn't know it myself?" she replied with her jolly smile returning. "That shows how silly I am."

"No, Eva, you are the most sensible person I know, that is what worries me now. Get ready as soon as you can and we will go and stay all day."

Eva got Nellie and herself ready in record time and Walter hitched a horse to the cutter, the same faithful Prince, though he was not as fast or as fine a horse as he had been when he was taking Eva to parties and church affairs. But Prince still could trot along at a pretty fast clip and neither Walter nor Eva would think of parting with him.

While they were at Doctor Stuart's home they learned that Mandy was planning to sell the sixty acres of her farm that included the house where Deo's lived, expecting to keep the rest of the land and the acre of ground on which her house stood. When they went home they drove slowly past the place and the empty house seemed to be standing there waiting -- waiting for someone, or maybe Eva imagined that too.

"Do you think we could buy it, Walter?" she asked wistfully. "Could we sell our other place and move here?"

"I suppose we could, if you want to."

"But do you think it would be wise?"

"That is something we can never be certain of, we have to do what we want to do and if that makes us happy or contented, that is the important things."

"Sixty acres isn't much farm ground though," said Eva.

"Maybe we could keep the other place and farm both," suggested Walter.

"That would be too much for you" protested Eva.

"I could have a hired man," said Walter with a laugh. "I'd like that all right."

"I suppose you would," Eva remarked. "Maybe you could find one who likes to milk, that would suit you I expect."

"Absolutely. I rather like that place myself. Maybe I'll see about it tomorrow."

Walter went to see Mandy the next day; they agreed on the price for the land, and the Milburn family planned to move there the first of March. Frank Layton rented the buildings and small pasture on Walter's place since it was nearer to town.

Eva took a keen interest in her new home and long before spring had come she had her garden spot all planned, and her flower garden too. She seemed to be more full of the joy of living then she had been for some time, although she never could have said she was unhappy or really dissatisfied.

One warm day in May, she took Nellie and they walked to the home of her parents where she dug up a root of the rosebush that still grew beside the kitchen door and from which she had taken the roses for her wedding almost nine years ago. Mary Stuart helped her wrap the roots and dirt carefully so they could be transplanted successfully.

When Eva and Nellie walked across the bridge they stopped and Eva stood for a moment watching the small stream of water that trickled along as happily and naturally as it had when Eva was a little girl like her own Nellie.

"Why don't you go down there and play sometime and make mud pies like Finch and I used to do, Nellie," Eva asked her daughter.

"I don't like to make mud pies, they make my hands too dirty. I would rather play with my doll," Nellie replied seriously.

"Yes, I guess you would," Eva said dreamily, "but that is fun too."

When Walter came in for supper Eva made him stop to look at her rosebush beside the kitchen door.

"I'm going to plant more flowers along this side of the house too," said she, moving about and talking with the animation and sparkle in her face and

eyes that had been her greatest charm for Walter.

"Say, Eva, what has happened to you anyway?" he asked.

"Why, nothing that I know of. Why do you ask?"

"Well, you're different, more young and gay like you used to be. Are you happier here?"

"I don't know what to call it, but I understand it myself. I believe that I missed the timber, spring in the woods, flowers and birds, and that little creek down there where I used to play. It does something to me. I look out across the timber and my heart seems to soar to a higher finer place where I find the greatest happiness and contentment. Perhaps the timber is my inspiration to happiness. There is something that will give happiness to everyone although many people will never know what it is until it is gone and then may not know what it is and, unable to find the cause, are unhappy. This scenery puts new thoughts in my head, poetic thoughts, I think of soft breezes blowing, and robins singing and I want to write poetry like I used to.

It's wonderful but maybe it sounds kind of crazy too," she said suddenly losing her enthusiasm.

"No, it isn't Eva, I don't understand it so well, but I know what you mean and I am glad you found your inspiration again. I'm not like you. I don't see those things like you do but somehow you always take me along and bring me a richer appreciation of all things beautiful too."

"You're wonderful, Walter, always so understanding, I'm lucky you are."

"No, I'm the lucky person, I wouldn't love you if you were different because it wouldn't be you, that is what appeals to me."

"I suppose it makes sense, to us anyway, I would hesitate to try explaining it to anyone else."

"Mamma," Nellie's voice broke the spell, "I think I smell something burning."

"Heavens!" cried Eva rushing into the house where she opened the oven door and discovered their biscuits were considerably past the golden brown stage.

"Now, you see, that is what comes from having such a queer wife," Eva said.

"We haven't had a burned biscuit in six years," Walter declared "and I'm going to enjoy them. Now, explain that if you can, my dear."

Walter hired a man when he started to plant corn and for convenience made a deal with Ot Layton who was farming some ground north of Stratford. Ot boarded at Walter's and did his work while Walter's hired man stayed at Laytons and farmed the ground there.

Summer came and went, and fall came suddenly with a sharp frost in late September that turned the leaves from green to gold, red and brown again. Soon it was time to husk corn, that slow monotonous job that every farmer dreaded. The young men did not mind the work so much because they were strong and agile and could stoop over and pick the downrows easily.

The job was easier when there were three men at each wagon, two picked the rows on either side of the wagon while the other picked the downrow, also the men could change off so one did not have to pick the ears on the broken down stalks all the time.

John Chapman picked alone and had his own method. He always said an Irishman could not pick corn and throw it in the wagon at the same time and get anything done so he went and picked it, and threw it in piles on the ground. Then later in the day he drove out with the team and wagon, picked the corn up off the ground and threw it in the wagon.

A neighbor had still a different method. He unhooked the tugs of the harness so his team could not run away while he worked, then picked his five rows on both sides and behind the wagon. When he had finished the rows there he hitched up again, drove on a few yards and repeated the process. He didn't get so many bushels in a day but by sticking to the job he managed to get done eventually.

The men wore mittens made from thin, rough sack material and picked though the snow was deep and the frost thick on the shucks most of the forenoon. Some used a steel peg, fastened by thongs around the finger, enabling them to shred the husks from the ear quite readily. On milder days many of the men scorned the homemade mittens and picked barehanded.

Lonse Gleason, Nels Westrum and Pete Angstrom all young and ambitious to make some extra money, finished up their cornpicking at home, then went to Scott County to pick more corn. They were gone about three weeks and when they returned they announced a startling new idea that threatened to revolutionize the cornpicking industry.

Out in Scott County the farmers were using what they called a "bangboard" on their wagon. It was a board about a foot high on the right side of the wagon box against which they could throw the ears of corn. By this plan they could pick two or three rows on the left side of the wagon, instead of picking on both sides and also eliminate that difficult, back breaking down row each time through the field. The corn was picked out in lands and this certainly was an easier way of doing a job that was hard enough under any circumstances.

The boys were anxious to show how it worked and inquired if someone did not have part of a field left where they could give a demonstration. There is usually one farmer who doesn't hurry or has had bad luck that delayed his work, so they did find a field in which to demonstrate this new idea. Naturally a large crowd of men was on hand to watch this new-fangled affair. The boys had been thinking about the system hoping to improve it so instead of putting on only one board, they put on three, which made a fine target for the ears and reduced the necessity of looking each time they threw an ear. The three boys each took a row of corn and started through the field.

The ears flew thick and fast against the bangboard, as the boys worked their way along the rows, while the amazed crowd of men followed along and watched them. They picked down one side then drove back with a fine load of corn in the box. Naturally the men were pleased with the idea and John Chapman, the witty Irishman, voiced the thought that had been in the minds of all the others, "Why in tarnation didn't somebody think of this before?"

The farmers were so enthused about the system, they all made a bangboard for their own wagons immediately and for the first time in their lives looked forward eagerly to the next cornpicking season which promised to be much easier.

Elizabeth Near finished her term of school the next spring and Finch insisted that it was time they were thinking of themselves. She was 22 years old and Finch would be 26 on September 19th. Elizabeth's brothers and sisters were now quite grown up and it was time they were accepting some responsibilities instead of depending on the generous kindness of their sister. Elizabeth knew that she and Finch had waited long enough that engagements could last too long and were unwise many times so they began to talk of the day when they would be married.

There had been little time for Elizabeth to plan for her own home while she had been teaching and managing the home of her father, so she asked if it might not be well for her to take that summer to help her sisters learn more about the management of the home while she took a vacation from her duties and prepared some things for her own home.

"It is practically a disgrace for a girl to get married and not have a thing prepared, you know," she told Finch.

"It all depends on the girl, I would say, and in your case you have a very good excuse. But I understand how you feel and I am perfectly satisfied this way. Do you have any certain date in mind for the wedding?"

"No, not in particular. I was thinking it would be nice to be married in September."

"I was thinking the same thing and I would like to be married on my birthday if that is agreeable to you, Elizabeth."

"I think that would be lovely."

The summer months passed swiftly and pleasantly for the two happy people as time always does for those whose hours are occupried with pleasant thoughts and duties. September came and it was time to complete the wedding plans. Elizabeth worked long hours on her wedding dress and Mandy cleaned and prepared her house for the wedding that would take place there.

It was a small home wedding, on this bright, pleasant September day and long before the noon hour at which time the wedding was to take place, the guests had arrived. Elizabeth's family came, her father, and Dora, Ed, Maude and George as well as Jo and Beck Smith. Mandy's family was there too, Frank and Angelina, Bill and Hannah, Elizabeth and M. D. Bramon, Will and Eliza, with all the grandchildren.

Reverend Barr of Homer came to perform the ceremony and so the worthy couple took their places among the bouquets of flowers with whcih Mandy had decorated one end of the room. Finch took the affair very seriously standing so straight and finelooking, beside his bride who looked more tiny and delicate than usual in her light blue dress with its shirred waist and full skirt. She looked so happy and Finch was justly proud of her, and both repeated their marriage vows with all the honesty and sincerety of their loyal hearts and faithful love.

After the wedding, Mandy and her girls served a wedding dinner for the party and the afternoon was spent in pleasant visiting and companionship. The guests left about four o'clock and Mandy and the bridal couple were alone in their home where Finch and Elizabeth expected to live until spring when they would move to their own home east of the Whitaker farm.

When the evening chores were done and supper was over Finch asked Elizabeth if she would like to walk across the bridge and visit a while with Walter and Eva and she replied that she would be delighted.

Eva met them at the door and kissed both of them in her affectionate way and invited them to come in.

"Forgive me for kissing your husband, Elizabeth, but he is just like a brother to me and I'm so happy for both of you but why are you spending your time visiting here when you surely would rather be talking to each other?" Eva asked all in one breath seemingly.

"I know how much you and Finch think of each other and I know you are cousins and I also know that his heart is big enough for both of us," Elizabeth replied softly.

"Indeed it is, Elizabeth," Finch said. "I knew you would understand. Eva and I have spent many happy hours together while we were growing up and nothing was ever quite complete unless we could share our happiness."

"I was hoping you would come and I want you to come often," Eva said as she offered them chairs. "Walter is late with his milking as usual, he never will learn to like that job and puts it off as long as he can, but he will soon be through."

"We can't stay long," Finch explained. "All I wanted to come for was your blessing and now that we have it we will return. I like to walk across the bridge just at this time of day."

"You sentimental man, you are as bad as I am," Eva exclaimed.

"I have noticed that it has brought you much happiness," Finch said.

"Indeed it has, I hope both of you will have as much."

"Thank you, Eva," Elizabeth said, "I am sure we will have."

Elizabeth and Finch walked slowly out to the road and down across the bridge just as the sun was sinking in the west and the hush of the twilight hour was broken only by the rustling of the leaves of the white oak trees and the soft murmur of the small stream that flowed under the bridge.

Hand in hand they walked up the small hill and turned into the yard. Neither spoke for they were happy and the joy that was theirs needed no expression. At the door of the house they stopped while Finch turned in that involuntary gesture so typical of his father, to look out across the hills where the sky and the treetops met in the dim outlines of dusk, then they passed through the door into the room where Mandy was waiting with a sweet smile to welcome her children home. -- Hook's Point rose and vanished, but the sweet name of HOME was permanent.

THE END

Final

